

3 children charged with lynching

VITRY-SUR-SEINE, France (AFP) — Three children aged between eight and 10 have been charged in connection with the murder of a man said to have been lynched and thrown down a well, police said here Friday. The three, who allegedly acted with the assistance of another homeless man, have been charged with "deliberate assault with intent to kill," and have been returned to their parents' homes. The man was physically assaulted, kicked and beaten with sticks until dead, and then thrown down a well, police said. The children involved in the killing, which took place at Vitry, in the Paris suburbs, on Oct. 29, all came from homes "without problems." The man said to have taken part in the killing, aged about 40, has been remanded in custody. He was said to have fought with the victim and then urged the children on to lynch him. A third man, also homeless, was charged with failing to aid a person in danger and released. Police said a statement by a fourth child, aged 13, who was present at the incident but not directly involved, had enabled them to pursue the charges. The body of the victim, in his fifties, was found in the well the day after the killing.

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U.S. diplomat held hostage by Yemen

SANA (R) — A U.S. diplomat has been kidnapped by a tribal chief with a grievance against the Yemeni government, the Interior Ministry said on Friday. Haynes R. Mahoney, director of the U.S. Information Service office in the Yemeni capital Sanaa, was snatched on Thursday evening as he got into his car after a British Airways party at a city centre hotel. The Interior Ministry, in the first official statement about the abduction, said it had learned that Mr. Mahoney was being held in the Jabb area of Marib province east of Sanaa. It said the five kidnappers acted on orders from "one of the sheikhs of the area who justified his act on the grounds that he has demands to make to the government." Mr. Mahoney, whose car was also taken, is the first diplomat kidnapped in Yemen in recent years but tribesmen pursuing local quarrels with oil companies and the government have carried out a string of abductions of foreigners. Marib is about 120 kilometres east of Sanaa. Political sources said the Yemeni government was handling the kidnapping "at the highest level" and interior minister Yahya Mohammad Al Mutawakel went to Marib late Thursday night and again on Friday in an effort to secure Mr. Mahoney's release.

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'Jordan-Egypt ties are vital'

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdal Salam Al Majali Thursday said His Majesty King Hussein has always been trying to rally the Arab field and restore Arab solidarity. In a statement to Jordan Television following the King's visit on Wednesday to Cairo, Dr. Majali said the relation between King Hussein and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak "is vital for restoring Arab solidarity, particularly at this delicate time when a regional order is being considered." On Jordan's efforts to contain the Yemeni crisis, Dr. Majali said the King was maintaining contacts with Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh and Vice President Ali Saleh Al Beedi to solve the crisis (See separate story).

Shaath may meet French officials

PARIS (R) — The French foreign ministry said on Friday that senior Palestinian negotiator Nabil Shaath was in Paris and might meet ministry officials. "Mr. Shaath is, indeed, in Paris," ministry spokesman Richard Duque told reporters, confirming rumours that began circulating on Thursday. Mr. Duque did not indicate why Dr. Shaath, the chief Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) negotiator at talks in Cairo on the planned Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho, was in Paris. Nor did he give any details of the visit, saying only that Dr. Shaath had been to France on several previous occasions. Asked if Mr. Shaath was expected to meet French officials, Mr. Duque said: "To my knowledge nothing is planned but it cannot be ruled out that he might have contacts with the foreign ministry."

Gorbachev, ex-leaders summoned by court

MOSCOW (R) — Former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and other top officials will be called to testify from next week at the trial of leaders of an abortive 1991 coup, Itar-Tass news agency said Friday. Russia's Supreme Court ruled it would call nine former Soviet officials accused of launching the August coup against Mr. Gorbachev. Former KGB secret police chief Vladimir Kruchkov would be the first of the accused to testify. Apart from Mr. Gorbachev the list of witnesses included former Russian Parliament Chairman Ruslan Khatsibulatov and former Vice-President Alexander Rutskoi, imprisoned after another failed revolt against President Boris Yeltsin last month. Sessions expected to touch upon classified information would be closed.

Moroccan soldier shot in Somalia

MOGADISHU (AFP) — An unidentified sniper shot and wounded a Moroccan soldier in Somalia, a U.N. military spokeswoman said Friday. The soldier was hit in the chest Thursday in the port city of Merka, 90 kilometres southwest of Mogadishu. Further details on his condition were unknown, spokeswoman Dawn Kilpatrick said. Morocco has 1,300 soldiers serving in the 28,000-strong United Nations force in Somalia. Several Moroccans have been killed, mostly in clashes with gunmen in Mogadishu that have left more than 75 U.N. and U.S. troops dead since the U.S. turned the Somalia intervention over to U.N. command on May 4 (See page 2 for related story).

Menem in Cyprus

LARNACA (AFP) — Argentine President Carlos Menem arrived here Friday to visit his country's troops serving in the U.N. peacekeeping force on the divided island. Mr. Menem said upon arrival that he hoped for the reunification of the island. Mr. Menem accompanied by Defence Minister Oscar Clément and Foreign Minister Guido di Tella, is on Saturday to visit the 370 Argentine U.N. troops and meet with Cypriot President Glafcos Clerides. Mr. Menem is to leave Cyprus for Japan on Monday.

Arafat: Israeli pullout should not be delayed

Violence and protracted negotiations cast shadow over autonomy accord

OSLO (Agencies) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat on Friday said Israel should stick to a planned timetable for starting troop withdrawals from Gaza and the West Bank town of Jericho despite a recent surge of violence.

"I don't think we are in need of more time if there is a will," Mr. Arafat told a news conference during a brief visit to Oslo. "I think there is no reason to delay implementation of what we've signed."

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said Friday a Dec. 13 deadline for starting Israeli troop withdrawals from Gaza and Jericho was "not sacred."

"That date is not sacred because it was set as a target," Mr. Rabin said.

"We have to reach agreement before this date. That is the objective but if it takes a bit longer, it will not matter if this can avoid misunderstandings," Mr. Rabin said.

Israeli troops shot and killed one man and wounded 36 others Thursday in the worst violence since Mr. Rabin and Mr. Arafat signed their historic peace deal in September.

Israel struggled to keep a lid on tensions Friday, but its

army shot dead another leading activist of the Hamas group (see separate story).

"It is very dangerous, very serious and we are looking at these events ... this escalation has to be stopped, the only way to stop it is the quick implementation for the agreements on the ground, and not delays," Mr. Arafat said.

"We are in need of quick implementation," Mr. Arafat added at a news conference with Norwegian Foreign Minister Johan Joergen Holst, who helped broker the PLO-Israel peace deal in secret meetings in Norway this year.

Mr. Arafat had late night talks with Mr. Holst to discuss the establishment of Palestine institutions for economic planning and development. The two also met on Friday morning.

"We've (also) been talking about institutions for security," said Mr. Holst, chairman of an ad hoc committee coordinating international aid to secure the success of the peace accord.

International donors have pledged \$2 billion over the next five years for development of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, but Mr. Arafat said on Friday afternoon for Sweden.

said this was not sufficient.

"We are starting from zero. All our infrastructure has been completely destroyed by the (Israeli) occupation. Until the end of this century we are in need of \$13 billion," Mr. Arafat said.

The money was needed to build roads, telecommunications, a port, schools, hospitals, electricity supply etc. etc. And the Palestinians need "everything, everything, everything," said Mr. Arafat, who was later scheduled to meet Norway's King Harald.

Mr. Arafat, also touring Sweden, Denmark and Finland after leaving Norway on Friday, expressed his wish for a peaceful Christmas.

"We are approaching Christmas very soon and I hope that we'll have a real peaceful atmosphere in Bethlehem for this new Christmas." We must "not forget the meaning of Bethlehem."

Mr. Arafat, who was accompanied on his trip to Oslo by PLO information chief Yasser Abed Rabbo, spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi and Sari Nusseibeh, the director of the Palestinian Economic Council, left Oslo Friday afternoon for Sweden.

Overnight after he was shot when a car he was travelling in failed to stop at a roadblock.

Akels home refugee camp of Jabalia was under curfew as was the Sheikh Radwan area of Gaza City, a fundamentalist stronghold, the army said.

Khaled Mustapha Zir, 25, was shot dead when border guards raided the home where he was held up in Jerusalem's Palestinian quarter of Sour Baher, they said.

Zir was a leader of the Izzeddin Al Qassem, the armed wing of Hamas, whose leader Imad Akel was shot dead on Wednesday by Israeli troops in occupied Gaza City.

Akels death sparked a wave of violence.

"At 8 a.m. (0600 GMT) this morning the police captured an Arab (aged) 22 or 23 years ... be tried to escape from the police and be shot (a) few bullets toward our people," a police spokesman told reporters at the scene in Sour Baher neighbourhood.

"They called (on) him to stop. He didn't and they shot him. He was one of the leaders of Izzeddin Al Qassem from (the West Bank city of) Hebron," he said.

Israeli military censors delayed publication of the report for more than nine hours.

Troops opened fire on stone-throwers in the Shati refugee camp on the edge of Gaza City Friday and wounded three boys aged 13, 15 and 17, doctors said, as protests erupted in several places on the occupied strip.

The army stepped up patrols and mounted extra roadblocks for the second day of a three-day strike to protest the killing of Akel.

Soldiers shot and wounded 34 Palestinians on Thursday and a Palestinian with a Saudi passport died of his wounds

overnight after he was shot when a car he was travelling in failed to stop at a roadblock.

Akels home refugee camp of Jabalia was under curfew as was the Sheikh Radwan area of Gaza City, a fundamentalist stronghold, the army said.

About 1,000 people demonstrated after Friday prayers in the Shajaya neighbourhood of Gaza City where Akel was killed.

A similar protest was held in Khan Yunis while at Rafah, on the border with Egypt, the armed wing of Fatah fired in the air in memory of Akel.

The Fatah Hawks urged Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat to condemn the killing as he had done the killing of an Israeli settler by renegade Fatah activists on Nov. 13.

At the Palestine Mosque in Gaza City, Sheikh Yousef Al Zahar also criticised the leadership of the Palestinian leadership to condemn Akels killing.

"In recent days six of the sons of Islam have been killed. Is that the price of peace?" he asked in a sermon.

The strike called by Hamas closed the Gaza Strip for a second day but had no impact on the West Bank.

Haidar Abdul Shafi, head of the Palestinian delegation to the bilateral Middle East peace talks, blamed the army for the clashes.

"The Palestinians have the right to express their feelings about the situation. It's the army's intervention that led to the violence."

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said in remarks broadcast Friday that he could not yet demand that the PLO headquarters in Tunis control the violence-wracked Gaza Strip.

"I cannot demand today control by let's say the PLO-

Jordan offers to mediate Yemeni crisis

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein has invited Yemeni President Abdullah Saleh and Vice-President Ali Saleh Al Beedi to hold a reconciliation meeting in Amman, informed sources said Friday.

The sources said contacts were continuing to arrange the meeting in line with an offer made by the King to mediate in the nine-month-old dispute between the two Yemeni leaders. The sources could not provide a definite date.

"His Majesty offered his good offices as a mediator in the conflict through messages to be sent to President Saleh and Mr. Beedi early this month," said one source.

Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker paid a visit to Yemen three weeks ago to deliver the messages in separate meetings with Mr. Saleh and Mr. Beedi, the sources told the Jordan Times.

The Jordanian offer to mediate the conflict, which is threatening the three-and-a-half-year-old merger between conservative North Yemen and formerly Marxist South Yemen, was "well received" by the Yemeni leaders, another source said.

"The Yemeni leaders understand and appreciate the goodwill gesture of Jordan and both of them believe that King Hussein, whom they trust, could be the catalyst in bringing them together and ending the conflict once and for all," said the source.

According to the source, both leaders are trying to convince their supporters and loyalists of the need to bring about Yemeni reconciliation and the "wisdom of meeting away from Yemen to discuss the crisis and means how to settle it."

The Yemeni crisis stemmed from what Mr. Beedi's Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP), which held power in the south until the merger, saw as the domination and single-handed approach to political and economic issues by Mr. Saleh's General People's Congress (GPC) after general elections held in April.

(Continued on page 5)

Iraq accepts monitoring, wants U.N. sanctions lifted

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Iraq formally agreed Friday to long-term monitoring of its arms potential to ensure it does not reacquire nuclear, chemical, biological and ballistic weapons whose destruction was called for in Resolution 687 of April 1991, adopted shortly after the end of the Gulf war.

Mr. Sahaf added: "Iraq, therefore, expresses the hope that after this positive step on its part, and after all the other positive developments which were called for in the documents of the United Nations have confirmed officially, that the Security Council implements its obligations towards Iraq as stated in resolution 687."

"Iraq hopes that the beginning of the process shall be the immediate and full implementation of paragraph 22 without any obstructions, limitations or additional conditions."

"I should like to inform you of the decision of the government of Iraq to accept the obligations stated in resolution 687 (1991) and to comply with the provisions of the plans for monitoring and verification in accordance with the said resolution," Mr. Sahaf wrote.

Resolution 687, adopted by the council in October 1991,

approved a plan for long-term monitoring of Iraq's arms potential to ensure it does not reacquire nuclear, chemical, biological and ballistic weapons whose destruction was called for in Resolution 687 of April 1991, adopted shortly after the end of the Gulf war.

But until now it has balked at formally accepting Resolution 687, concerning future monitoring, until it has been assured that sanctions on its exports — including oil, its economic lifeline — would be lifted.

Mr. Sahaf's letter appears to amount to acceptance of Resolution 687 without first receiving such assurances.

U.N. inspection officials have not yet given Baghdad a clean bill of health regarding the scrapping of its existing weapons stocks and facilities and say the biggest gaps in their information concern chemical and biological materials.

A high-level Iraqi team, lead by General Amr Mohammad Rashid, director of Baghdad's Military-Industrial Authority, arrived in New York last week for talks with the U.N. special commission on Iraq's arms.

They were joined this week by Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz, who has been lobbying Security Council members for an end to sanctions.

190 suspects rounded up after bomb attack on Sedki

CAIRO (Agencies) — Egyptian police have rounded up 190 suspects after a bomb attack on Prime Minister Atiq Sedki which missed its target but killed a schoolgirl, police said Friday.

They also said the bombers had used a remote-controlled device under a car for Thursday's attack in the northern Cairo suburb of Heliopolis that killed the 12-year-old girl outside a school and injured 21 others.

Most of the 190 suspects were detained in the northern suburbs.

Police voiced doubts over the claim sent to foreign news agencies that Al Jihad, which assassinated former President Anwar Sadat in 1981, had carried out the bombing near Dr. Sedki's home.

The underground group has been weakened over the past few years, they said, suggesting the claim was designed to put police off the trail of the real perpetrator.

Dr. Sedki narrowly escaped the blast, the latest round of a war between Islamic militants and the government of Presi-

dent Hosni Mubarak that has claimed more than 230 lives since March 1992.

The Interior Ministry said Friday four of the injured were in critical condition. A six-year-old girl was in a coma.

The arrests were made in dawn raids in Ain Shams, a known militant stronghold on the edge of Cairo, and other districts around the Egyptian capital, security sources said.

They said no specific evidence linked the militants to the assassination attempt. Those detained were known as active Muslim fundamentalists arrested in the past.

It had been parked for some days on the side of a main road near Dr. Sedki's house in Heliopolis, also close to military intelligence offices.

But the red Opel had no number plates. Police were trying to trace its owner through the serial numbers of its chassis and engine.

Al Abram said Friday the bomb weighed between eight and 10 kilograms, which would make it the biggest used by militants since they stepped up their violent campaign last year.

Jordan moving with caution towards fresh economic priorities

By Wafa Amr Special in the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan rejects a peace treaty with Israel until its relationship with the Palestinian and Israeli economies has been defined, and until the Jewish state recognises Jordanian water rights and sovereignty over Jordanian territory occupied in 1967 and agrees on a solution to the refugees problem.

Jordanian officials said although Jordan was ready to implement immediate "confidence-building measures" towards Israel, it would be some time before an actual peace treaty with the Jewish state would be signed.

In the meantime, Jordan's dilemma lies in finding ways to maximise its benefits from the Sept. 13 Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)-Israel accord, which has obviously marginalised its role in the Palestinian economy and future economic relations.

The signing of the PLO-Israel accord led to hesitation in Jordan's economy and caused uncertainty among Jordanian businessmen, the majority of whom are of Palestinian origin, leading to an economic slowdown.

Addis Ababa meeting could be a turning point for Somalia quagmire

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — U.S. Officials are eyeing a meeting next week in Ethiopia as a potential turning point in determining whether Somalia will live in peace or return to the savagery of the past.

With American and other officials offering encouragement from the sidelines, leaders from Somalia's various rival clans will gather in Addis Ababa to talk about resolving their differences.

The hope here is that a successful meeting could lead to a full-fledged reconciliation conference in Somalia itself.

Failure to make a start towards peaceful dialogue could spark renewed warfare, hastening the day when the international community gives up on Somalia as a lost cause.

The most obvious sign of existing weariness with Somalia was President Bill Clinton's decision last month to end the U.S. military presence there by March 31 — just four months from now. There are about 16,000 U.S. troops either in Mogadishu or on warships off shore.

If the Somalis can not move towards national reconciliation, "we really are headed into a difficult situation," said a senior State department official, asking not to be identified.

When the Americans depart, most of the remaining U.N. forces representing 28 countries probably will follow suit. Continued international assistance flows hinge on whether Somalis are able to live in peace with one another.

Somali warlord Mohammad Farah Aideed has said he will attend the meeting in Ethiopia, but it is unclear whether he will be bearing an olive branch.

The senior U.S. official said the possibility that General Aideed may be more interested in victory than in reconciliation cannot be ruled out because his militia is perhaps Somalia's best armed and most fearsome.

The Addis Ababa meeting will occur on the heels of an international donors conference set to begin Monday, also in the Ethiopian capital.

The Clinton administration has promised a \$100 million donation "if and only if" Somalis are able to reach a political settlement.

A fragile truce has brought relative calm to Mogadishu in recent weeks but scattered fighting persists outside the



American soldiers dish up Thanksgiving dinner in a U.S. mess hall in Mogadishu Thursday (AFP photo)

capital.

Gen. Aideed's forces are blamed for killing scores of Pakistani and American troops in recent months. But U.N. and U.S. officials have renewed political contacts with Gen. Aideed, recognising there can be no progress towards reconciliation without him.

U.S. presidential envoy Robert Oakley met with Gen. Aideed last week just days after the U.N. Security Council lifted a warrant for Gen. Aideed's arrest.

Security is just one of the concerns international relief workers face in Somalia. Officials point out that the country remains without even the most basic institutions, including a tax or law enforcement system or even a banking system.

Without progress on the political front, officials said the international community could easily write off Somalia and shift its resources to countries more capable of helping themselves.

"The clock is ticking," said a U.S. relief official.

A special U.S. envoy met Gen. Aideed on Thursday to discuss the conference due to be held in Addis Ababa.

U.S. State Department officials in Mogadishu Gen. Aideed was expected to attend the Addis Ababa meeting, though he gave no promises during his one-and-a-half hour talks with Richard Bogosian.

A United Nations official warned that the world body could cut relief supplies to areas of the capital Mogadishu that did not cooperate with political reconciliation efforts.

"The boat is going to sail. Do you want to be part of it or to be left out?" he said.

Somali experts said the official was referring to Gen. Aideed's umbrella Somalia National Alliance, widely blamed for a series of attacks against U.N. troops and personnel in Somalia, including the June 5 killing of 24 Pakistani peacekeepers.

Mr. Bogosian was driven half way to his meeting by U.S. soldiers and was then handed over to Aideed guards who escorted him to a villa somewhere in southern Mogadishu.

Gen. Aideed has blamed U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali for a futile four-and-a-half month manhunt for him, saying it resulted in the deaths of 70 peacekeepers and hundreds of Somalis.

In a sharp shift of policy towards political reconciliation, the United Nations last week formally called off its hunt for Gen. Aideed.

Gen. Aideed says one condition for his participation in the ad conference is the release of eight supporters still detained by the U.N. mission.

"A U.S. official said that Gen. Aideed still refused to talk to U.N. officials but had asked repeatedly to negotiate with Americans. Asked why this was so, one official said: "You can look at that two ways, either they are playing us against the United Nations or they don't just trust them."

U.S. infantry troops were put on alert throughout the morning as a security measure but the meeting went on peacefully.

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Fateh beaten in Bir Zeit

FATEH, which has controlled Bir Zeit University for the past eight years, was ousted Wednesday by a union of hard-line PLO factions and Hamas in the first student council elections in the territories since the signing of the Israel-PLO accord.

The Shabiba (Fateh), which had been the largest faction, ran together with Fida (a splinter group of the DFLP which supports the peace process) and the People's Party. The elections are on a "winner take all" system, and the losing party is not represented.

"The elections are important because they are political and reflect the mood of the people after the signing of the autonomy deal," said Riad Malki, a professor in Bir Zeit's engineering department.

Activists from the various factions and interested parties from the territories anxiously awaited the results all afternoon. Rula Ma'ayah, a candidate on the Fateh list, said that the 800 new students, almost a third of the student body, would be the key factor.

Although many PFLP and DFLP supporters were uneasy about the alliance with Hamas, they said it was necessary to prove a point. "We are not running with Hamas to beat Fateh, but to fight the autonomy agreement and Fateh's dictatorial decision-making process, in which only one man (Yasser Arafat) decides what to do," said Ellen Saba, a candidate on the PFLP-Hamas list.

She said the alliance was the beginning of a common front between all the opposition groups and will extend outside the university.

Mabrouk, a member of the Islamic Bloc, said that the decision to unite the opposition groups was taken in Damascus, where 10 groups opposing the peace process vowed to form a National Islamic Front.

Ahmad, another bloc member, said that Hamas had only agreed to run with the radical PLO factions because the dangers of the autonomy deal are so great that Islam could permit an alliance with the secular left-wing groups. "Through

this coalition, we will prove to the people and to Arafat that a large number of Palestinians are against the agreement," he said.

Secular professors and students said they feared that once Hamas gets onto the council, it would start asking for sexually segregated classes and other Islamic measures, especially since it is the largest faction in the opposition coalition. But Saba said that Hamas had promised not to interfere with student life on campus, and Ahmad confirmed this.

Hamas and the radical PLO factions agreed that Islamics will hold the council presidency for the first six months, and the PFLP for the next six months. The PFLP and DFLP will have a majority on the council with five of the nine seats.

Hamas and PFLP had promised to change the system of elections by introducing proportional representation, but Fateh activists said that if the opposition won, it would forget about the promise. — The Jerusalem Post.

Christopher's trip agenda focuses on trade, peace

WASHINGTON (USIA) — During a two-week trip abroad beginning Nov. 29, Secretary of State Warren Christopher intends to press America's European allies on the need for concluding global trade reforms next month, and also to try to convince Arabs and Israelis to move closer towards a comprehensive Middle East peace.

State Department spokesman Michael McCurry said Mr. Christopher will travel to Rome for a Nov. 30 meeting of foreign ministers of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). He then will go to Brussels for talks Dec. 1 with top European Union officials on the Uruguay round of trade talks before attending the annual winter meeting of the North Atlantic (NATO) Council of foreign ministers on Dec. 2. He will attend a meeting of NATO and former Warsaw Pact ministers in the so-called NACC or North Atlantic Cooperation Council, scheduled for Dec. 3.

The secretary will fly late Dec. 3 to Israel, where he is scheduled to open talks with Israeli leaders on Dec. 5, before travelling to Damascus. Mr. McCurry said in a news briefing Wednesday. The remainder of Mr. Christopher's Middle East itinerary has not been firmed up. Mr. McCurry

said, but the secretary plans multiple stops in Israel, where he will be based, as well as visits to Damascus, Amman, Jordan and probably Tunis.

Mr. McCurry reminded reporters that the United States has been working intensively to promote three objectives in the Middle East, while supporting the parties as they make progress in their own Arab-Israeli peace negotiations.

First, Mr. Christopher will be stressing the importance of implementing the joint declaration of principles signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation on Sept. 13, Mr. McCurry said.

"The secretary will want to encourage the Israelis and the Palestinians, to resolve the remaining issues that they face so that implementation of the ground can begin soon and so that assistance can be used effectively," he said, adding that Mr. Christopher is planning to meet twice with PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat.

As a second objective, Mr. McCurry said, Mr. Christopher will be promoting progress on the other bilateral negotiating tracks between Syria and Israel, Lebanon and Israel and Jordan and Israel.

"He will explore what can be done to move the negotiations forward," the spokesman said.

Thirdly, he said, the secret-

ary will be emphasising "the importance of creating an environment that nurtures and supports peacekeeping broadly."

Mr. McCurry reminded reporters that the United States has been working intensively to promote three objectives in the Middle East, while supporting the parties as they make progress in their own Arab-Israeli peace negotiations.

The spokesman said he expects Christopher to "have some fairly detailed and fairly private and confidential discussions" with Syrian President Hafiz Al Assad and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in an effort to produce progress on the track of bilateral negotiations. Mr. Christopher will base his Mideast mission in Israel and is expected to spend at least one night in Syria, Mr. McCurry said.

"We are seeking, as you know, a comprehensive settlement for the region and I think the secretary feels that it's important at this point to do everything he can personally to see that progress stays on track," Mr. McCurry said, but be cautioned reporters not to expect any major breakthrough.

Starting his trip in Europe, Mr. Christopher "hopes to drive home the linkage between security concerns and global prosperity," "fusing" NATO issues and the conclusion of global talks on trade liberalisation.

Comprehensive peace in two years — Bouez

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Bouez has said comprehensive peace in the Middle East can be achieved in two years but it will have to come in stages.

"In principle, this peace has great chances and could be achieved in the next two years," Mr. Bouez said in an interview aired by state-run Lebanon Television late Thursday.

"It would not come at once but be in stages," he said without elaborating.

Lebanese officials say they expect separate declarations of principle to be signed between Israel and Lebanon and Syria in four to five months.

This would be followed by the formation of committees on both tracks which would need months to agree on details of an Israeli pullout from South Lebanon and the Golan Heights, they say.

Once that was settled, the committees would tackle the political and economic angles of the agreements and only after that Israeli-Syrian and Israeli-Lebanese peace pacts would be signed.

The officials say the whole process would take up to two years and it was important to get started.

Mr. Bouez urged Israel in the interview to stop manoeuvring and wasting time "because this peace is linked to persons and leaderships and to specific circumstances which might change in political camps."

He said Lebanon would sign

a peace treaty with Israel only as part of a comprehensive settlement and after all Arab countries regained their rights.

"The return of the (occupied) territory in the south is not enough for Lebanon to recognise Israel and sign a peace treaty," Mr. Bouez said.

"Lebanon looks at the peace treaty through first the return of the Lebanese rights and through the return of Syrian, Palestinian and Jordanian rights."

Mr. Bouez vowed Beirut would not sign a separate agreement with Israel as such a move would endanger the unity of the Lebanese people and threaten Lebanon's stability.

Mr. Bouez said there was still no clear Israeli commitment to a total withdrawal from the south. But despite the lack of a breakthrough, the talks with Israel had broken the moral and psychological taboos.

Two years of bilateral peace talks between Lebanon and Israel have been fruitless, with Beirut insisting on an unconditional Israeli pullout from a self-styled "security zone" in South Lebanon in line with U.N. Resolution 425 of 1978.

Israel wants security and political arrangements for a pullout.

Mr. Bouez criticised the limited Palestinian self-rule deal between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation because it failed to define the nature and future of the Palestinian entity.

Clinton 'most hated' for meeting Rushdie — Iran

TEHRAN (Agencies) — Iran Friday blasted U.S. President Bill Clinton as the "most hated man" of world Muslims for meeting Salman Rushdie, who has been condemned to death on charges of blasphemy.

Mr. Rushdie said Iranian officials "sort of privately admit" that a \$2 million bounty on his life won't be paid even if he was killed.

"There's no money," Mr. Rushdie said. "If people hope to take a quick day trip to Tehran and ask for the money, they might be disappointed."

Mr. Rushdie said Islamic fundamentalists who have kept the threat against him alive were part of a political movement, and be questioned the legitimacy of the farva against him.

"A fatwa is supposed to be a legal document. It's supposed to be a text, signed by the person who issues it," Mr. Rushdie said. "There is no piece of paper on which this fatwa is written signed by (Ayatollah) Khomeini and witnessed by others."

"It doesn't exist," Mr. Rushdie said, but added he nonetheless hoped Iranian authorities will soon understand that it is in Iran's own best interest "to get rid of it."

Mr. Clinton was "become the most hated man in the Muslim World" for receiving the British writer, Chief Justice Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi said during the weekly prayers at Tehran University.

"If you bad the least political sense, what would be the implication of receiving a man who has insulted the Muslim and Christian prophets?" he said.

Mr. Clinton met Mr. Rushdie Wednesday in Washington in a show of support for the author, who was condemned to death by Iran's late spiritual guide, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, for blasphemy in his book "The Satanic Verses."

The Indian-born author, living in hiding since the sentence was passed in 1989, has stepped up a campaign to urge Western leaders to pressure Iran to lift the death threat.

But Iranian leaders have upheld the sentence, arguing it was a religious decree which could not be changed. An Islamic foundation has offered a reward of \$2 million for anyone who kills Rushdie.

Mr. Rushdie meanwhile claimed the Iranians who issued the death threat against him lack the \$2 million reward.

In an interview with David Frost broadcast on the Public Broadcasting System Friday evening, Mr. Rushdie said he hoped his meeting with President Clinton would prove a "powerful turn of the screw" in getting the threat made by the late Ayatollah lifted.

"I feel I've now, at least, managed to get sympathetic commitments from very senior people, including the president of the United States," said Mr.

Impoverished Iraqis offer kidneys for transplant

By Jane Arraf

Reuter

BAGHDAD — Iraqi impoverished by more than three years of U.N. sanctions are offering their kidneys to strangers who need transplants.

Medical sources say Iraqis who in the past would never have considered giving up a kidney are now lining up to sell them at between \$100 and \$1000 each.

The Iraqi dinar has lost more than 99 per cent of its value since the United Nations imposed the sanctions in 1990. Wages have fallen far behind prices and \$100 is now equivalent to more than one year's average salary.

The organ market has even attracted non-Iraqis, who come to Baghdad and advertise.

It is not known how many of the Iraqis do in fact find people willing to buy and how many go ahead with the operation.

Surgeon Walid Al Khayal, who owns the only Iraqi hospital willing to transplant kidneys from donors who are not related to the recipient, said he tried to ensure that the donors had humanitarian motives.

But no one could control private financial arrangements between the donor and the recipient, he said.

"They (potential donors) send me for example letters saying that they are willing to give a kidney because they are in need of money or they want to get married but they cannot support themselves.

be said. "We usually don't answer their letters."

Many centres in the world would consider it unethical but in cases where there are no relatives there is no alternative... what am I going to tell patients who come to me — 'go and die?'

"Even between families sometimes I detect the issue of money... they are expecting compensation," said Dr. Al Khayal, who has done 1,300 kidney transplants since returning as chief army medical director in 1973.

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"They (potential donors) send me for example letters saying that they are willing to give a kidney because they are in need of money or they want to get married but they cannot support themselves.</p

Crown Prince calls on U.N. to spur energy cooperation on regional, international scale

AMMAN (Petra) — The Fourth Arab International Solar Energy Conference ended in Amman Thursday with a call from His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on the United nations to promote regional and international cooperation in energy-related matters.

Addressing the closing session, the Crown Prince said there was need for closer cooperation among scientists and decision-makers in energy-related matters in the course of implementing energy projects.

Prince Hassan, who attended part of the session, urged researchers to set up a network of communications to exchange information and called on the countries of the south to benefit from cooperation with northern industrialised nations.

Ending their deliberations which lasted five days, the participants from 25 Arab and European countries as well as the United States strongly recommended the establishment of a data and technology base

and echoed the Prince's call for greater international and regional cooperation for the transfer of modern technology from the industrialised to developing nations.

One of the recommendations called for more focus on renewable energy, joint energy-related projects among Arab states and the establishment of a data base for solar radiation, climatic information and other related fields.

They demanded that a regional centre be set up in the Arab World to train decision-makers, scientists, technicians and engineers in energy and renewable energy skills.

The participants, who decided to hold their fifth conference in Bahrain in 1993, stressed the need for promoting the utilisation of solar energy in industry.

The participants reviewed working papers and studies on solar energy, solar radiatio, photovoltaics, means of developing solar energy, and experiences of the participating nations.

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein delegated His Royal Highness Prince Faisal Thursday to attend an artistic festival at the Palace of Culture of Al Hussein Youth City. Organised by the Faizah Charitable Society, the festival was part of the country's celebrations of King Hussein's 58th birthday this month. Among those attending were Her Royal Highness Princess Alia Al Faisal, Cabinet members, senators, deputies and other senior officials.

Also Thursday Prince Faisal attended another major celebration held by the Ministry of Youth celebrating the King's birthday. Taking part in the celebration were representatives of youth centres from various parts of the country. At the end of the event Prince Faisal presented awards to winners in a competition of the youth centres. In Karak, the King's birthday was observed with a sponsored march organised by the local Society for the Care of the Handicapped in cooperation with the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (OAF).

Taking part in the march were heads of government departments, representatives of the public and private sectors, charitable societies, school children and other citizens. Prince Firas Ben Ra'd represented his father His Royal Highness Prince Ra'd Be-Zeid at the march, which was also attended by Governor Khalaf Mahaseh and deputies from Karak governorate. The march ended at the Mina Special Education Centre for Handicapped Children which was established in 1983.

Charities, ministry hold King's day festivities

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NEWS IN BRIEF

King receives cable from Arafat

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Thursday received a cable from Palestinian President Yasser Arafat congratulating him on opening the 12th Parliament and wishing him continued good health and happiness. President Arafat thanked King Hussein for his continuous support for the Palestinian cause and the Palestinian people.

Cabinet to establish court in Ajloun

AJLOUN (Petra) — The Cabinet has decided to establish a Court of First Instance in Ajloun. Justice Minister Rabea al Wazani will open the court on Dec. 2.

Health Ministry to open follow-up units

AMMAN (Petra) — Health Minister Abdul Rahim Malhas has decided to create follow-up units at the various health departments in the Kingdom's eight governorates. Dr. Malhas called on health department directors to follow up on the work of these units and report on their performance. The minister also decided to hold computer training courses for the health department's heads in preparation for computerising the ministry's work on data collection and analysis.

NHF head reviews projects with visiting UNESCO official

AMMAN (Petra) — Director General of Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) Ina'm Mufti Thursday reviewed with senior officials from the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) the foundation's developmental objectives and the methodology followed to achieve comprehensive development. At a meeting with Assistant Director General of UNESCO Collin Power and senior UNESCO officials, Mrs. Mufti discussed scopes of cooperation between NHF and UNESCO in the areas of basic education. Dr. Power expressed interest in cooperating with the NHF and in replicating its experience in basic education in other countries in the region.

Ministry starts Arbor Day plans

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Agriculture has prepared for Arbor Day celebrations due in January and announced that the principal tree-planting celebrations will be held at Wadi Qitar district near Abu Alana, southeast of Amman. Noting that the main celebration at the site will be held under the patronage of His Majesty King Hussein, the ministry said that arrangements are being made in cooperation with the Amman Municipality to turn the celebration site into a national park to be named "Al Hussein National Park." The 1,247 dunum park will be planted with 100,000 trees, irrigated via a drip irrigation system, announced the ministry in a statement Thursday. It said work is underway to level the land, dig holes for the trees and build stone hedges. Each year, the Ministry of Agriculture nurseries produce millions of fruit and forest tree seedlings, the majority of which are given free to the public, mostly during Arbor Day celebrations.

ASTA chief visits Jordan

AMMAN (J.T.) — President and Chief Executive Officer of American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA) Earlene Causey arrived here as part of a tour of the Middle East. Ms. Causey's visit, the first ever to the region, is aimed at promoting tourism to Jordan and the Middle East. At a meeting Thursday with Ministry of Tourism Secretary General Nasri Al-Ali and representatives of the tourism sector in Jordan, Ms. Causey discussed means of encouraging American tourists to visit Jordan and spending a longer period of time in the Kingdom before going to the occupied Arab territories. Ms. Causey will tour archaeological sites and other tourist attractions before departing for home Sunday.

New cerebral palsy centre to care for 1,000 children

IRBID (J.T.) — More than 1,000 children with cerebral palsy in Irbid Governorate will benefit from services at a new centre which is to be formally opened here by Her Majesty Queen Noor Tuesday.

Fakhri Bilbeisi, president of the Cerebral Palsy Foundation (CPF), announced that the new centre, equipped to deal with cerebral palsy patients has been completed and ready for occupancy in Irbid.

Since 1985, the temporary CPF centre was housed at the

Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST), said Mr. Bilbeisi, who Thursday visited the new premises.

He said that the Irbid Municipality donated the land for the project which cost JD 75,000; JD 30,000 was donated by the General Union of Voluntary Societies, (GUVS).

CPF runs centres for the care of children with cerebral palsy in Amman, Zarqa, Karak, Aqaba and Salt in addition to Irbid and has been

fund-raising annually through sponsored marches usually organised during October and through donations from individuals, companies and other institutions.

Mr. Bilbeisi said that most services are offered free and in cooperation with local hospitals, adding that the CPF centre had cared for more than 7,000 children since 1977. The foundation, he said, aims at reducing the prevalence of cerebral palsy in Jordan from five to one per 1,000 births.

ESCWA to hold symposium on regional water resources

AMMAN (J.T.) — The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) will hold a regional symposium on water resources in the region with a special focus on water use and conservation from Nov. 28 to Dec. 2 in Amman.

Delegates of ESCWA-member countries and international water experts will examine solutions to the growing demand for water, resulting from rapid socio-economic developments. They will also address

water scarcity aggravated by limited resources in the region.

The Jordanian ministries of Water and Irrigation and Health will provide the logistic support to the symposium, jointly organised by ESCWA and the World Health Organisation/Regional Centre for Environmental Health Activities (CEHA), in cooperation with the U.N. Environment Programme (UNEP).

The ESCWA regional symposium, which will take place

at the auditorium of the Ministry of Water and Irrigation, is expected to provide a forum for government officials, experts, analysts and decision-makers to formulate plans and policies for the development, conservation, management and utilisation of water resources. In this regard, appropriate mechanisms for promotion of regional and interregional cooperation in the water sector will be thoroughly examined.

Jordanian workforce stood at 600,000 at end of 1992

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The number of actually employed Jordanians stood at 600,000 at the end of 1992, reflecting a rise of about 10 per cent during the year, and the same increase is expected this year, officials said Thursday, citing statistics released by the Ministry of Labour.

The figure represented an almost 20 per cent increase of the actually employed workforce since 1986.

Actual unemployment in the country is more than 20 per cent, although the number of job seekers registered with the Ministry of Labour is between 10 and 11 per cent.

According to Labour Ministry statistics, reproduced in the September 1993 bulletin of the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ), the bulk of the actually employed Jordanian workforce is in the social, personal and public administrative services — 292,200, or nearly 50 per cent.

The statistics, which did not provide figures of guest workers in Jordan, showed that 44,400 Jordanians were employed in the agriculture sector — up from 40,848 in 1991 and 37,436 in 1986. Officials estimated the figure of non-Jordanians employed in this sector to be double the number of Jordanians.

The mining and manufacturing sector employed 61,800 Jordanians — up from 56,856 in 1991 and 52,706 in 1986.

Sixty thousand Jordanians were employed in the construction sector at the end of 1992, compared with 54,096 at the end of 1991 and 54,183 at the end of 1986. This reflected the increase in construction activities after a slack in the late 1980s; in 1989 and the total number of Jordanian workers stood at 50,780.

The number of Jordanians working in the trade, restaurants and hotels sector stood at 63,000 at the end of 1992, reflecting an increase of nearly five per cent from 1991, and about 25 per cent over 1986, when the figure stood at 49,258.

The transport, storage and communication sector employed 52,200 Jordanians in 1992, compared with 56,856 in 1991.

These figures showed the slack in the sector as a result of Gulf crisis in 1990/91; in 1990, the number of Jordanian workforce in this sector went down to 44,557 from the 46,963 registered in 1988.

Finance, insurance and real estate services employed 19,800 Jordanians in 1992, reflecting this month the figure was brought down to 11 per cent as a result of more opportunities in the local industrial sector and an increase in the number of Jordanians securing jobs in the Gulf countries after a slack in the wake of the Gulf crisis.

Employed Jordanian workforce are women.

Similarly, the government remained the largest single employer in the Kingdom, accounting for about 400,000 of the actually employed workforce.

Official figures had put unemployment in the country at 15 per cent around about three months ago, but Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali said early this month the figure was brought down to 11 per cent as a result of more opportunities in the local industrial sector and an increase in the number of Jordanians securing jobs in the Gulf countries after a slack in the wake of the Gulf crisis.

According to economist and columnist Fahed Fanek, there are no definite parameters to assess unemployment in the country.

Official figures are mostly based on Jordanians who register their names with the Employment Office of the Ministry of Labour. Those figures, analysts say, should reflect a fairly good assessment of the situation since most Jordanians opt for jobs either with the government or in positions secured through the Ministry of Labour.

Therefore, they say, the difference between the official figures and unofficial figures represent those who have not registered with the Ministry of Labour and the Civil Service Commission.

Egypt's vastness, civilisation captured on canvas

By Ica Wahbeh
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The works of Farghali Abdul Hafiez, son of south Egypt, reflect his desire to represent the vastness of his country while bringing in his personal experience and subtly making use of his Pharaonic legacy.

A distinguished contemporary Egyptian artist, Mr. Hafiez's creativity makes him experiment with styles and means, breaking the conventional distinction between painter and sculptor and using in his paintings Nile mud and straw, in addition to the conventional mixed media.

In most of his paintings the artist constructs the surface of his works with layers of mud which he strengthens with straws. This mud, filled with remembrances of civilisation, is more than the basis of his work; it is filled with a symbolism of its own, it is the material of the first home, the carrier of the first human print.

The hazy spontaneous pastel scratches on its surface create a naive world of static creatures, with no sense of perspective or depth conveyed.

It is a world of vast expanses, whose colours suggest the seasons or a vastness of a different nature — the sea — and which are either void of human presence or have it

represented by its very presence or by the marks it leaves: adobes it builds, trees it plants.

In the case of nature, the feeling of frozen life is heavily felt. An exception, perhaps, is the sea, dark blue, huge, waves have their crests ready to break on the beach on which dark figures, barely distinguishable from the all blue background, have their backs turned to the viewer, prepared to face the fury of the water.

The majority of the representations are those of landscapes. Palm trees abound on the horizon of settlements surrounded by donkey-pulled carriages, goats, people (mostly fully curved women) caught in the position we remember from our grandparents' family photos: frozen smiles, eyes fixed on the camera, hands sensibly gathered along the body.

Proportions and perspective are not used in any traditional way. Trees grow on the buildings, or straight from them, they form the hair of the women or defy gravity.

Representations are transparent, one could be seen through another, being an odd part of it.

In more structured representations, regular geometrical figures come together to create

clustered houses perched on top of each other, modern housing in the middle of vastness. The colours are greyish green or ochre brown; the mere passing of the crayons over the rough surface of the rough paper creates an intricate texture of brick pattern that blends perfectly in the overall construction.

A mud, straw, oil pastel and mixed media combination forms the basis of a big canvas (placed over a wooden square) where the background is pale yellow and pink, and stylised human figures and the omnipresent donkey cart are engraved or drawn.

One attempt at collage and the sand colour flicked with the brush over the canvas create relief and movement to the otherwise still images.

A theme is recurrent: man and animal which are inseparable.

The "portraits gallery" has an exquisitely detailed representation of a black man, a child, a smoking man and some women. One triptych is that of a woman passing through a metamorphosis that sees her transformed into a man. It reminds one of the computer transformation of the famous Mona Lisa portrait into that of her

creator, Leonardo da Vinci.

Among these portraits is one haunting landscape — a vast ochre brown mustard taupe expanse of desert with hills (or perhaps the Saqqara pyramid) projected on the horizon and, in the foreground, strong

In the economic talks, there were deep divisions between the PLO and Israel over the critical issue of water rights.

Palestinians reject Israeli imposition of a uniform customs and tax regime.

"We insist on free trade with Jordan and to have our own economic decisions about customs and taxation," Mr. Kuriel said.

Jordan also rejects Israel's imposition of uniform customs and tax regimes, and wants a free trade model with the Palestinian economy. Jordan wants to benefit from peace in the region, but officials complain that the Kingdom is facing discouragement.

"Israel only talks of benefits for all from regional economic cooperation, but in practice they delay all that is good," said one official. "We are prepared for a NAFTA model with Israel, but we do it if it could deal with it because it will be faced with strong internal opposition to alter its taxation structure since it is the most protective economy in the world."

Jordanian and PLO officials said both sides could reach separate economic agreements with Israel until they endorse the PLO-Jordan economic agreement. Jordan is keen on proceeding in this direction, but the PLO has been delaying any move in the direction of an economic understanding with either Jordan or Israel because of political considerations, they said.

A PLO official said the Israeli-PLO economic committee talks in Paris which ended last week and resumed again this week did not produce any agreements because the PLO wanted to sign an agreement with Jordan first.

Palestinian economy is the link between Jordan and Israel, but to Israel's advantage, and it has been benefiting from its occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip since 1967," one Jordanian official said. "But we want to reverse this to Jordan's advantage and to the advantage of the Palestinians."

Until Jordan's relations with the Palestinian and Israeli economies were defined and until progress was achieved on the Syrian-Israeli track. But this will not stop Jordan from implementing partial normalisation, or what is called "confidence-building measures" with Israel leading to full peace," one official said.

Officials expect Jordan to sign an economic agreement sometime next year if Israel shows genuine intentions towards a just peace in the region.

"Israel too has to reciprocate by taking many confidence-building measures towards

Arabs to allay fears of Israeli intentions

politically, one official said. Western diplomats anticipate the implementation of partial normalisation very soon, in such fields as infrastructure, environment, and in some other economic fields.

Observers said that Jordan had decided since the signing of PLO-Israel accord in the gradual building of blocks to reach peace with Israel. They said the Kingdom, Palestinians and

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Israeli disservice to peace

THE PAST three days have been the bloodiest that Gaza Strip witnessed in many months. The killing of Hamas leaders Wednesday and Friday by Israeli soldiers triggered mass demonstrations and the wounding of scores of other Palestinians. The Rabin government immediately expressed rejoice over what it saw as a blow to Hamas in Gaza, as if the killing of two of the Islamic movement's leaders is the answer to Israeli woes. It would be short-sighted to believe that the shooting of Hamas's Imad Aqel on Wednesday and Khalid Zir Friday would end the violence that is currently targeted against the Sept. 13 PLO-Israel accord. To begin within, the elimination of one opposition leader would immediately lead to the rise of a new leader who could be even more determined and vengeful than his predecessor. Surely, the Israeli authorities know this fact, something that suggests that they have other motives in the dramatic show of raw military power in the past few days.

A more logical explanation for the new trend can be found in the Israeli popular demand for a more forceful ending of violence against their countrymen in the wake of the sudden rise in the number of attacks on Israelis. The Rabin government must have concluded that a more violent wave of repression against the Palestinians in the occupied territories, in a bid to allay the anxieties of his people and abort the series of attempts to undermine its Knesset standing, was the solution. It was no accident therefore that prior to the wave of terror against the Palestinians, the Israeli prime minister called on his forces to exercise a more militant attitude against what he called the "enemies of peace."

Yet this old-new policy of Israel would only backfire should it continue to be the hallmark of the current stage of negotiations prior to the transfer of authority to the PLO. The PLO leadership has already too much in its hands and is expected to encounter mounting hardships in its attempts to strengthen its control over the territories soon to be relinquished to Palestinian interim self-rule. The foes of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat are bound to capitalise on the recent wave of violence against Palestinian opposition. Some voices are already accusing the Israelis of doing the dirty work on behalf of the PLO leader. Arafat, meanwhile, is walking a delicate path that is full of traps of all sorts and dimensions. He certainly needs help in navigating the Palestinian ship to safe waters. The recent Israeli violence in Gaza Strip and elsewhere in the occupied territories is the last thing that the proponents of the PLO-Israel peace agreement would need. The Rabin government should therefore entertain more imaginative and civilised ways to assist the cause of peace in the area.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

KING HUSSEIN's visit to Cairo and his talks with the Egyptian leader were a manifestation of Jordan's pursuit of all efforts to unify Arab ranks and fuse collective Arab action vis-à-vis the crucial stage the Arabs are entering at the moment, said Al Ra'i daily. The paper said that apart from discussing inter-Arab affairs and bilateral ties, the King and the Egyptian president gave attention to the peace process which King Hussein was said to be helping to regain legitimate Arab rights. The Cairo summit, which came in the wake of King Hussein's talks with the Syrian president, reflected Jordan's keenness on ensuring for the Arabs a lasting settlement with Israel and a peace that can ensure Arab rights and stability of the region, added the paper. In view of Israel's continued drive to conclude separate peace with each Arab state, Jordan believes that there is no alternative to bringing the Arabs together and fusing their collective action if they seek a lasting settlement on all fronts, continued the daily. It said the meetings of the Arab leaders assume a special importance, coming before a tour by the U.S. secretary of state and other American officials in the course of giving momentum to the peace process. The paper said that it is the responsibility of the Arab parties to coordinate policies and stand at this stage to deal with the coming developments in their region.

A COLUMNIST in Sawt Al Shab daily said that the United Nations, acting on direct instructions from the United States, was exercising immoral acts against Iraq and the Iraqi people. The continued embargo on Iraq, which has fully implemented all U.N. resolutions, is a political tool and a form of blackmail being practised by the U.N. and the United States, said Ismail Abu Bandoura. The writer said the Arab countries and other peace-loving nations should gather their potentials and join their forces to expose such practices and end the immoral and unjust actions directed against the Iraqi population.

Jordanian Perspective

By Dr. Musa Keilani

Coordinated Arab stand, conditional normalisation of ties with Israel are key to peace

THE VISIT of His Majesty King Hussein to Egypt and the one he had with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on Wednesday marked a new turn in Jordanian-Egyptian relations and sealed reconciliation after three years of strain.

It may no longer be relevant to recall the causes of strain since the prevailing mood in the Arab World is to put the past behind us and get ahead with the pressing issues that challenge the entire Arab Nation.

But it is indeed relevant to reaffirm that Jordan never abandoned its principled approach to pan-Arab issues, and its record over the decades since the Arab League was established in 1945 evidences that the Kingdom always upheld Arab interests over its national interests and paid dearly for it.

There are voices that criticised and are still critical of the Jordanian approach, from among ourselves, that Jordan has paid too heavily for its pan-Arab positions and it might not even have been worth to have adhered to its principles if only because it was isolated for the same principles that should also have been respected by others in the Arab Nation.

There is of course cynicism among many that no such thing as an Arab Nation or an Arab order ever existed and that the collective efforts of the Arabs for many years through the Arab League and its various institutions were more of a reflection of short-term interests rather than a sense of belonging.

Without digging deep into the affair — since it is difficult to get anywhere with it since it is too complex an issue to adjudicate — my belief is that the core sentiment that the Arabs stood to gain better from a collective stand than an individual position in the short, medium and long term was the motivating factor in the collective efforts that marked the decades until the year 1990.

Those who opted to assess their stands and adopt new policies and strategies based on the painful events of 1990 and 1991 — the Gulf crisis — are indeed short-sighted since the reality of the Arab strength in collective work has not changed at all.

But then, it might be too early for some of the Arabs to appreciate the reality; again, it is a matter of time, hopefully not too late, before they do so.

In the meantime, pressing issues are at hand. After decades of struggle and bitter conflict in the region, the Arabs have come face-to-face with a possibility of ending the state of tension that prevailed with Israel.

Given the political, military and economic conditions that surround the so-called new world order, particularly the aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict, it is a foregone conclusion that the Arabs are at a crossroads. Without a collective stand based on common interests and objectives, the Arabs stand to lose, perhaps for ever, most of what they stood for over the decades.

We hope that the realisation of this truth will be the driving force behind the new moves for inter-Arab reconciliation, and that the Cairo summit on Wednesday will be followed up with similar meetings.

Within the immediate context, an improvement in relations between Amman and Cairo was the first priority for Jordan at the summit. All signs are that this has been achieved, particularly the atmosphere that characterised the Cairo meetings and as stated by His Majesty the King and President Mubarak.

The second priority was advancing the Jordanian quest to heal the rift with some of the Gulf states. Obviously, President Mubarak could be a catalyst in the affair, but the fact remains

that any decision from the Gulf leaders in this sphere will have to come from themselves.

Jordan is not seeking reconciliation for reconciliation's sake; it has repeatedly stated its principled positions, which might or might not have been understood clearly by other Arabs, and its desire for a new era in relations based on common Arab objectives and interests.

There are very pressing issues at hand, particularly in the context of the peace process and the new world order and Arabs will be better off coming together and adopting a collective stand rather than limiting their views to narrow individual interests.

What we are witnessing today is a concerted Israeli effort to create a new Middle Eastern order to replace the Arab order. Israel's dedicated push for normalisation of relations with the Arabs, regardless of whether it is in a mood to accept, recognise and honour the rights of the Palestinians, is the best evidence of the Jewish state's objective.

At this juncture, when Israel appears rubbing its hands in glee calculating how much it stands to gain from normalised ties with the Arabs — one report says that it has even estimated trade with the Arabs in 1994 at \$750 million to \$1 billion — it is time the Arabs understand that the one card they hold to press Israel to meet the legitimate rights of the Palestinians. Jordan, Syria and Lebanon is Arab abstention from normalising relations and linking normalised ties with a fair and just solution to all aspects and dimensions of the conflict.

The third Jordanian priority at the Cairo summit was to prod President Mubarak into not only understanding the delicate Jordanian position in the peace process and the new pressure that is applied on the Kingdom to break Arab ranks and enter a peace accord with Israel but also to try his hand at alleviating that pressure.

No doubt, the main reasoning behind such pressure is the outcome of the Nov. 8 elections. There are many in the West who perceive that now that the hardliners who reject the peace process were set back in the elections the air has been cleared of hurdles for Jordan to sign a peace treaty.

That is a very short-sighted view. Regardless of the shape and nature of its Parliament, new or old, there are principles that Jordan cannot and will not violate, and any pressure applied on it comes from a lack of understanding.

Jordan means it when it says it will not sign a separate peace accord with Israel outside the framework of a settlement that addresses all the dimensions of the root conflict; it is not a matter of suitable political climate or conditions, but a condition warranted by the lopsided equation that characterises the Arab-Israeli situation and very much in conformity with the principles that the Kingdom has cherished and honoured throughout its modern history.

Within the broader context of Arab reconciliation, we are more than glad to host a meeting of Yemeni President Abdullah Saleh and Vice-President Ali Saleh Beidh, who have accepted a Jordanian invitation to travel to Amman and discuss the crises that have beset Yemen three years into unity. It might also be relevant to emphasise here that inter-Yemen reconciliation and the role Jordan is playing in it stem from our deep desire to see Yemeni unity continue. It does not aim at any party outside Yemen.

We hope the Yemeni summit here will be the first of many such gatherings that Amman will host in its drive to achieve a more coherent Arab stand at this crucial juncture in history.

The Week in Print

Parliamentarians should address issues of concern to the public, work to safeguard national interests

Reviewed by Elia Nasrallah

Jordanian dailies discussed over the past week the Middle East question, the situation in the occupied Arab lands, the coming tasks of the newly-elected Parliament and domestic affairs.

Commenting on what is going on in the occupied Arab lands, Al Dustour described as the ugliest and most despicable the atrocities of the Israeli occupation forces as they are exercising against the freedom fighters and resistance groups in Gaza.

The Israelis are ignoring the fact that they had signed with the PLO a deal to pull out from Arab lands and have escalated their repression campaigns against the resistance, said the writer.

Only three weeks before the scheduled time for the withdrawal of forces, Israel is trying to deepen the hatred and cause extreme suffering for as many Palestinians as possible, it added.

The writer said that the people of Palestine, occupied for more than a quarter of a century, are in need of freedom which can come through democracy once the occupation ends. He said that democracy can come only when the Palestinians willingly take part in the construction of national institutions and when they are quite happy with their functions.

The writer said that the Arab Nation should extend a helping hand to the Palestinians to assist them in establishing democratic institutions and their economic infrastructure to ensure a sustainable entity for their future generations.

Despite differences and divisions among Arab states, the Arab Nation should remain adamant in rejecting any calls from the United States to end the boycott of Israel, demanded Bader Abdul Haq, a communist in Al Ra'i.

The writer said that while the PLO shows optimism, the Israeli friends demand from the Arabs to maintain sanctions on Iraq, they insist that

they end their boycott of Israel. The writer added that the Arabs, who succeeded in using the boycott of Israeli goods successfully, should not give up their pressure on Israel in their bid to ensure freedom for the Palestinians.

Turning his attention to the upcoming meetings of the newly elected Parliament, Fahd Fanek, a communist in Al Ra'i daily, said that the deputies have a right and duty to demand that all parts of occupied Jordanian lands be returned and that Israel recognise Jordan's rights to water resources if the Kingdom is to approve a peace settlement with Israel.

The writer said that the newly formed blocs in Parliament are fledgling and have not yet matured enough to be involved in government business.

Mohammad Masalha, a columnist in Sawt Al Shab, said that any future trade exchanges between Jordan and the Palestinians should take place on equitable and fair basis and that Jordan's foreign debts be reduced as part of the deal. He expressed hope that the deputies would not sell out national interests.

Ahmad Dabbas, a columnist in Sawt Al Shab daily urged the Water Authority to heed the calls of the public who draw the authority's attention almost daily to the fact that broken water pipes are causing considerable loss of precious water.

Nazih Qusous said that it is rather silly for the Water Authority to put up notices to the public to save water at a time when its officials and workers ignore most of the calls to mend broken pipes.

Tawfiq Al Abed, a columnist in Al Dustour, voiced a public complaint when he said that cars roving Amman's districts, blowing their horns to draw attention to the fact that they sell gas are causing disturbance and troubling the peace of the local communities.

The writer said that there is a law against such a practice and both the police and the Civil Defence Department, which issued licences to the vendors, should interfere and protect the citizens' right to peace and quiet.

His views are countered by his colleague in Al Dustour, Mohammad Subeih. The writer said that since most of the deputies are independent and belong to no political party or group, there is no chance of giving each deputy a government post and hence it is pointless to involve the deputies in the executive branch.

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Experts believe Palestinian statehood can be achieved

By M. C. Jasperse

WASHINGTON — Will the Palestinians achieve statehood? Yes, a group of experts agreed, but only if they are able to craft a truly democratic government, and they, along with Israelis, can overcome old fears and perceptions.

"American enthusiasm for supporting the emerging Palestinian state will depend, to a degree, on whether it proves to be democratic," William Quandt said at a Nov. 18 conference here.

Mr. Quandt, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, scholar, diplomat, former National Security Council adviser and Camp David negotiator on the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, participated in one of two panels discussing the feasibility and implications of Palestinian statehood at the second annual international conference of The Centre for Policy Analysis on Palestine at Georgetown University.

In considering the question of Palestinian elections (projected to take place in July, 1994) Mr. Quandt added: "I think that this whole process needs an election to provide the legitimacy which it still doesn't entirely have."

Eric Rouleau, a French diplomat/scholar and the conference keynote speaker, stressed that the fears and perceptions of Palestinians and Israelis — regardless of how realistic they are — have to be overcome to achieve any true peace, or they will remain as psychological blocks to the normalisation of relations.

He predicted that a Palestinian state would emerge if the Israelis "meet the minimum national and psychological requirements of the Palestinian people — land and dignity."

Mr. Rouleau said that this could happen, since "paradoxically, the Israelis and the Palestinians are in the same boat: The failure of one party immediately provokes the failure of the other."

Thus, if the PLO fails to construct viable institutions for independence, "it's over for the (Israeli) Labour Party, and the Likud will take over." On the other hand, if the Labour Party loses power, "it's finished for the PLO and the process" which began with the Sept. 13 accords.

Mr. Rouleau, a journalist editor and author, served as the French ambassador to Tunisia, the Arab League, the PLO and Turkey. A scholar of both classical Hebrew and Arabic, Mr. Rouleau at one point headed the Middle East "Le Monde."

Dr. Sari Nusseibeh, a fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Centre for International Scholars, appearing in the morning session, said that "the main requirement or precondition for a successful effort (at Palestinian statehood) will have to be a sense of security." Without it, he predicted, Palestinians would not be able to achieve sustained economic growth.

To avoid failure, Dr. Nusseibeh said, both public funding and private investment will be needed. However, private investment will "only be forthcoming if there is a sense of security, and... a democracy that protects individual and group rights."

Dr. Nusseibeh described in detail the structure of the various political, economic and social councils that are being established to shape the new Palestinian entity. Until recently, he was the founder and chief of the technical and advisory committees support-

ing the Palestinian delegation to the Arab-Israeli peace talks. Dr. Karim Nashashibi, a Palestinian economist who is presently an assistant director of the Middle East department at the International Monetary Fund, also stressed the need to build a growing economy.

He said that "26 years of occupation" will render the task difficult, as the infrastructure is "in ruins," roads and sewer systems need to be rebuilt, and there is dependency (on Israel) due to the lack of agricultural industry and Palestinian "inability to invest" in themselves.

Anis Kassim, author of "Beyond the Long Tunnel," said that the Palestinians have been plunged into "a complicated maze... a dark tunnel." Whether they emerge with statehood depends on their "maintaining autonomy" "sovereignty in their state" while avoiding "shared sovereignty" with the Israelis.

The right to self-sovereignty, he said, must also be extended to Palestinian women, who actively participated in the int

Geneva talks probe germ warfare threat

By Clare Pedrick

GENEVA — Back in 1952, Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin decided to eliminate Marshal Tito, the intractable communist leader of former Yugoslavia, in a secret assassination plan. The weapon chosen by the Kremlin was an unusual one by any standards — Tito was to be sprayed with deadly plague bacteria from an aerosol can. As fate would have it, Stalin died before the plan could be put into action, and the attempt was called off. But throughout the long years of the cold war and even before it, scientists in top secret laboratories worked feverishly to develop sinister biological weapons capable of killing specific targets or, more chillingly, wiping out entire cities.

World War II was one of the most fertile periods for research into germ warfare. The British government's secret intelligence unit spent considerable effort and resources trying to invent ways of disposing of German enemies. At that time, British government scientists contaminated a remote island off the north coast of Scotland with anthrax, a disease that attacks the respiratory system of its victims and covers their bodies with painful ulcers. The British government's experiment was aimed at developing a biological weapon to be used in retaliation against the Germans. Should Hitler decide to use germ warfare against them, it was never needed, but only recently — after 50 years — was the island declared free of the lethal anthrax spores.

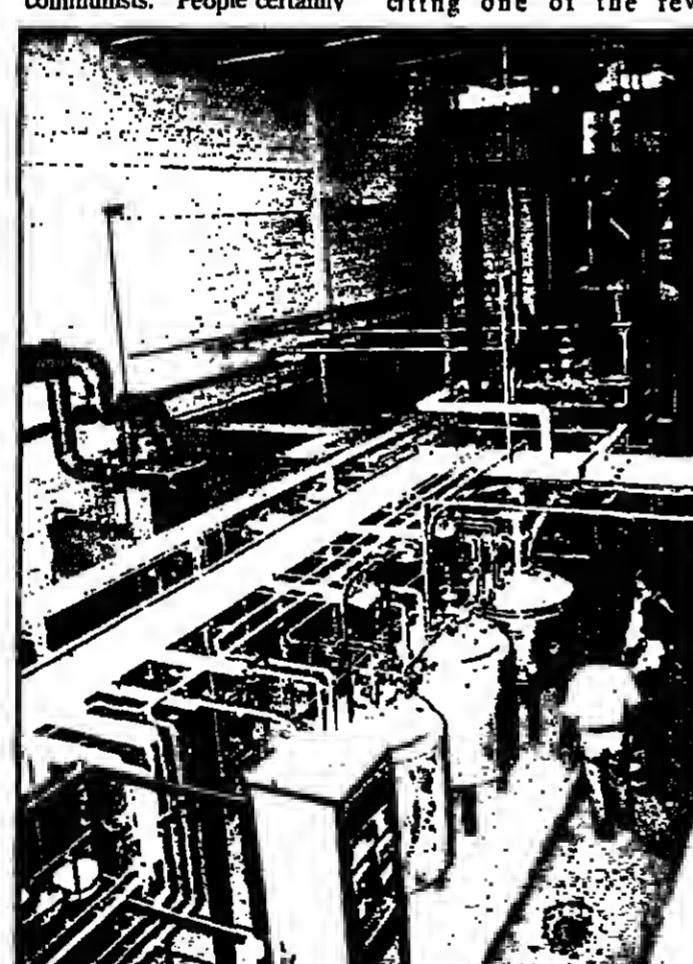
Long after the major world powers have, ostensibly, renounced such types of warfare, the international community is struggling to reach an agreement that would stop such dangerous weapons from reaching the hands of terrorists or smaller countries tempted by biological weapons as a cheaper alternative to more costly methods of mass destruction. A treaty banning the development, production and stockpiling of biological weapons has been in place since 1972 and has been ratified by 125 nations. The absence of a monitoring mechanism in the convention makes it next to useless as an instrument of control, say disarmament analysts. In Geneva this week, technical experts from around the globe are meeting to discuss how the 21-year-old treaty might be given some teeth.

"The major disadvantage of the biological weapons conven-

tion, as opposed to the non-proliferation treaty for nuclear weapons (NPT) or the chemical weapons convention (signed in January of this year), is that it contains no compliance section," said Richard Guthrie, a researcher at the Verification Information Technology Centre, a London-based organization that monitors disarmament treaties. There is always the very high risk that the invading troops will be infected and, in turn, bring the disease back to the country's own community," he explained. "For that reason, there have always been serious doubts about its usefulness as a military weapon."

Such considerations go a long way toward explaining why, on the rare occasions that biological weapons have been used, they have almost always been part of an undercover strategy. The cold war produced a battery of mysterious attempts at assassination and sabotage involving the use of bizarre germs and poisons. In a few cases — such as the murder of the Bulgarian dissident Georgi Markov with poison-tipped umbrella — the finger was pointed almost incontrovertibly at germ warfare. Markov was stabbed in the back of the leg on a crowded London street, where he was living in exile in the 1970s during the height of the second cold war. Although the wound — inflicted by the pointed of an umbrella — was hardly visible, his death was judged to have been the work of Bulgarian secret service officials.

Dozens of other cases have gone unproven. Stories are legion of James Bond-type attempts by the CIA to assassinate Cuban leader Fidel Castro with a poison-spiked cigar. The Soviet government was widely alleged to have used germ warfare to produce what became known as "yellow rain" in Cambodia and Laos in areas where there were pockets of insurgency against the communists. "People certainly



Facility devoted to developing biological weapons (WNL photo)

"Once you let the bug out, it can attack both sides," Mr. Greene said. That major drawback has made the biological weapon a less than attractive choice in traditional military campaigns. "For any power wanting to invade another country biological weapons are, in a sense, self-defeating. There is always the very high risk that the invading troops will be infected and, in turn, bring the disease back to the country's own community," he explained. "For that reason, there have always been serious doubts about its usefulness as a military weapon."

With the East-West conflict over, terrorists and developing countries are likely candidates for biological weapons development and use, say arms experts. The relative ease with which they can be produced and the comparatively low costs involved make them an attractive option, at least as a bargaining tool. Perry Robinson says biological weapons are "an extremely cheap equalizer." Since only very small quantities are needed for start-up, they can easily be smuggled across borders. "If you are talking about wanting to manufacture horrible diseases, you do not have to be enormously sophisticated to produce them in a laboratory and prepare a canister to disperse them over a population," said Mr. Greene.

"There is no doubt that you can really do a lot of damage with these things," said Perry Robinson. "The technology is not as simple as some people make it out to be, but it is not that sophisticated either. The possibility of poisoning people over an area of thousands or tens of thousands of square miles really is there. A little germ goes a very long way, and you can get a lot of germs into an aerosol can."

Germ warfare has yet to be used as a weapon of terrorism, at least by the mainstream groups. "In the early 1970s, a group of American terrorists in Chicago were arrested after threatening to contaminate the city's drinking water with a germ cultivated in their backyard," said Perry Robinson. "We have made giant strides with verification, especially with nuclear weapons and with chemical weapons, whose recent convention is considered a key model," said Mr. Greene.

"Verification in the case of biological weapons research is particularly hard. You need only a very small laboratory to create the bugs needed for developing biological weapons. Therefore, to have an effective verification system would mean having the right to intrude on all sorts of research and development facilities. That raises fears of commercial confidentiality."

The developing world has an

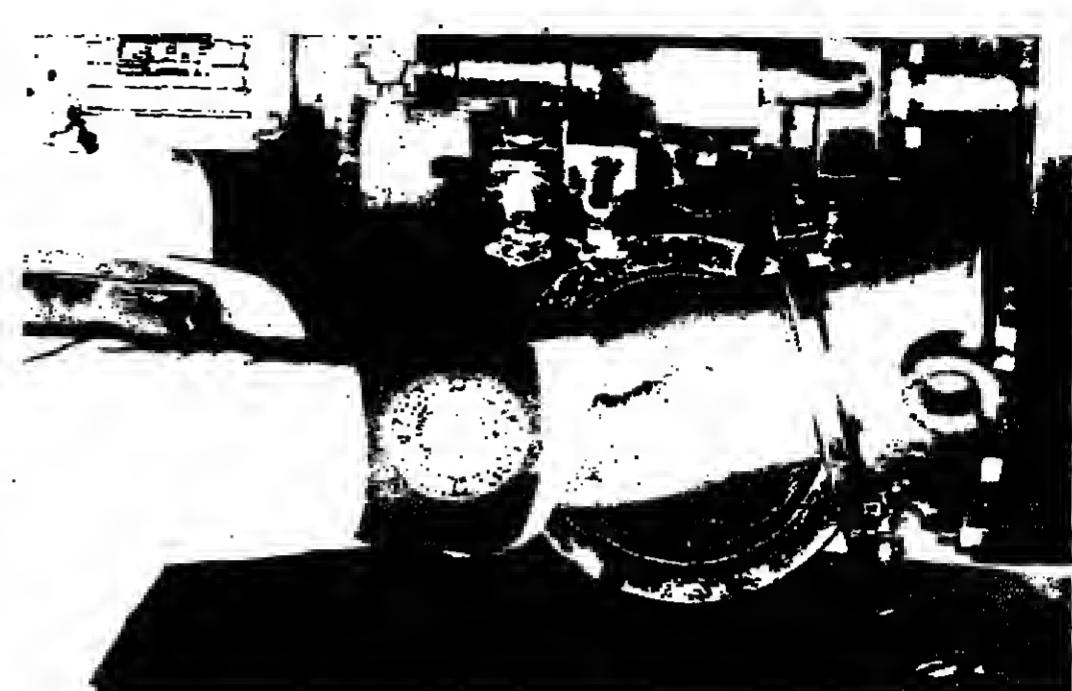
unlikely ally in its resistance to verification — the U.S. government. The intrusive nature of the controls needed to monitor biological weapons research make it an unrealistic proposition, claim government officials, especially in the U.S., where much defence research

is carried out by the private sector, which is highly sensitive to anything that might be construed as snooping for commercial secrets.

Opposing the U.S. line is a core of industrialized countries led by Sweden, Germany and Australia. They claim rapid advances in the field of biotechnology make it imperative to find an effective mechanism for ensuring that a close watch is kept on the nature — and purpose — of new technologies. "There is worry that laboratories specializing in biotechnology, one of the most rapidly advancing areas of research, could produce all sorts of bugs about which we know very little," said Mr. Greene.

One possible, and potentially disastrous, development would be the design of a timing mechanism that could render the bacteria or virus harmless after a certain number of hours, says the British arms expert. The advantage of chemical weapons over germ warfare is that techniques have been developed to make certain nerve gases harmless after as little as 30 seconds, making the area safe for the advancing troops or aggressors.

A similar advance in biological warfare technology would make it a far more attractive option. "Biotechnology has opened up a whole new area, which means that the task of verifying the



U.N. biological weapons inspectors take samples from fermenters at a single cell protein facility at Al Hakam (WNL photo)

is even more of an uphill struggle," said Mr. Greene.

With so many obstacles in its path, the best that the Geneva committee can hope to come up with is a general framework, say observers: a mechanism that would allow challenges but not on-demand inspections and that would act as confidence-building measure rather than a fail-safe guarantee.

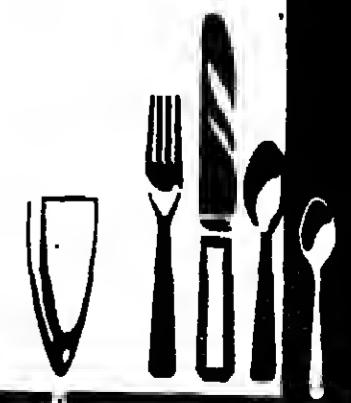
There is another major hurdle to be overcome before negotiators can arrive at even this water-down version of the verification system that some disarmament experts say is so desirable. Monitoring and verification are almost certain to be done on a cost-sharing basis, with Third World countries shouldering at least part of the considerable financial burden. Some poorer nations have already made it clear they are unwilling to accept such a deal. "I am not sure everyone is prepared to pay the bill," said Dr. Thomas Stock, head of the chemical and biological warfare armament and disarmament project at Stockholm's International Peace Research Institute. "Many states have realized in the past few years that verification is very expensive to undertake. It can be almost as just as expensive as armament" — World News Link.



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Gulf chemical weapons nightmare didn't occur — or did it?

By Walter R. Mears
The Associated Press

for the war against Saddam Hussein.

While acknowledging three instances in which at least traces of chemical weapons were detected in northern Saudi Arabia, the Pentagon said that could not be the cause of what is now called Gulf war syndrome. The symptoms include fatigue, weight loss, insomnia and pain in muscles and joints.

Even the source of the weapons gases remains a mystery; there is nothing to prove they came from Iraq and the Pentagon is checking with U.S. allies in the Gulf war to see if they know. The official Pentagon history of the war had said flatly that "Iraq did not use chemical or biological weapons."

It was 20 years in the case of Vietnam, 50 years for World War II veterans exposed to mustard gas in secret U.S. tests.

By comparison, this administration is moving fast, wary of the kind of drawn-out controversy that lasted until the government agreed to compensate veterans afflicted by exposure to Agent Orange in Vietnam. That was done in October, with Congress prod-

ing the Pentagon to act. The presumption that their illness is connected to their service, at least "until we unravel this mystery."

U.S. officials checked and concurred with the findings, although there was no other data to confirm them, the Pentagon said. That was done in October, with Congress prod-

ing the Pentagon to act. The presumption that their illness is connected to their service, at least "until we unravel this mystery."

Nearly 1,500 Gulf veterans have filed claims with the committee seeking compensation for disabilities they blame on environmental exposure during the war. Fewer than 100 had been approved as of October.

Eventually, there will have to be answers like those about ailments linked to Gulf duty.

It was a hundred day war, swift and victorious, with relatively few losses in battle. But it seems there are other casualties still to be counted.

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Tokyo stocks plunge to 10-month low

TOKYO (R) — Tokyo stocks plunged to a 10-month low Friday after investors dumped stocks in despair over Japan's dire economic outlook, underlined by a string of bad corporate earnings.

Pressured by a torrent of arbitrage unwinding, the Nikkei average plummeted 2.88 per cent, or 496.55 points, to end at 16,726.37, the lowest level since Jan. 27.

Other Asian share markets, however, generally shrugged off Tokyo's woes.

Tokyo's "bearish" market continues because there are no signs of economic recovery, said Isao Takahashi, head of the equities department at James Capel Pacific.

Sentiment was further pummeled by a lack of any fresh government initiatives to shore up the market, brokers said.

Another negative factor was the central Bank of Japan's

return to a neutral money stance Friday after Thursday's unexpectedly large fund injection, which sent the key overnight call rate lower. That dashed market hopes of lower money market rates in the near future.

But some brokers noted lower interest rates alone could not resurrect ailing stocks at current levels.

"Investors are starting to feel that even a discount rate cut of 0.5 percentage points will not work," said Kenichi Nagashita at Cosmo Securities.

The ailing stock market also weighed on the yen, allowing the dollar to close up against the Japanese currency at the end of the Tokyo session.

Dealers said falling Tokyo stock prices prompted late overseas dollar buying, possibly by U.S. securities firms and investors.

The dollar ended in Tokyo

at 108.52 yen and 1.7084 marks against 108.23 and 1.7079 in late European trade. The New York market was closed Thursday on Thanksgiving holiday.

"The tone of the Nikkei average will continue to set the trend for the dollar-yen," said a senior dealer with a major U.S. bank in Singapore.

The renewed slump in the Tokyo stock market is hampering recent efforts by Japanese banks to accelerate their return to profitability by writing off increasingly bigger provisions for bad loans.

Brian Waterhouse, an analyst at brokerage James Capel here, said that banks had been taking a more aggressive approach to provisions in a bid to clean them out of the balance sheet faster.

"It's a big, positive move by Japanese banks in the last six months. There will be even more in the second half," Mr. Waterhouse said.

A discreet fiscal nudge by the government has helped

Japanese banks to write off bigger sums. However, the magnitude of the loans, left unpaid after the speculative stock market bubble burst and the 1980s real estate boom ended, could brake Japan's economic recovery and paralyze banks for years to come.

The official total of bad loans as of the end of September by Japan's 21 biggest banks is 13.3 trillion yen, but financial circles estimate the total at 30 trillion to 40 trillion yen, equivalent to 10 per cent of current lending or 20 years of earnings results by the 21 banks.

Bad loans with Japan's 11 largest commercial banks, or so-called city banks, total 9.3 trillion yen, the seven trust banks 2.1 trillion, and the three long-term credit banks 1.9 trillion.

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General strike hits Belgian transport, industry

BRUSSELS (R) — Police used water cannon to disperse striking workers at Brussels airport Friday as a one-day general strike against government austerity measures crippled Belgian industry and transport systems.

A spokeswoman for the national airline Sabena said police had moved in to break up pickets who had blockaded access roads to the airport with burning tyres.

Passengers had to carry their own luggage from stranded cars through fog and cold weather to the airport terminal building.

There are still some demonstrators outside the airport. The average delay for flights is about 44 minutes, Sabena spokeswoman Pascale Zoetar told Reuters.

Across the rest of Belgium, international and local trains were at a standstill and there were no metro or bus services. International trains stopped in towns near Belgium and passengers were put onto buses, the state railway said.

Most schools, post offices and other public sector buildings were hurt and many big industrial firms had only skeleton staff.

One industrious baker in the northeastern town of Zolder, new key staff to work by helicopter, Belgian radio said.

"The strike call has been very well followed. There are some exceptions, such as in the banking sector, but the public sector has been paralyzed," said Diana de Krop, a spokeswoman for the CSC/ACV Christian Democratic Union, which called for the strike in conjunction with the socialist FGTB/ABVV union.

The general strike is the first major nationwide action called by both unions since 1936, when they fought for leave. Together the unions have about 2.5 million members.

Almost 60 years later, the unions want the four-party coalition drop or dilute austerity measures, which they say hit the poor hardest.

Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene told a news conference his government would meet the two main trade unions next Tuesday to discuss the austerity measures.

The plan includes what amounts to a three-year freeze on wages plus higher taxes and big social security spending cuts. Mr. Dehaene has said he was prepared to adjust some elements of the plan, but would refuse to budge on the wage-freeze.

The port of Antwerp, the second-biggest in Europe after Rotterdam in the Netherlands, was paralysed as workers headed the strike call.

Dollar remains firm against European currencies

This article is submitted by Naser Nabulsi, private client group, Merrill Lynch-Dubai

Overview

Fundamental view: The dollar remains firm against European currencies at the DM 1.70 level. We maintain our 12-month target of DM 1.85 based on our expectation of a sharp drop in European interest rates next year and possible monetary tightening by the Fed. The yen has weakened a bit against both the dollar and the DM in recent days in response to Japan's stock market slide.

Further yen weakness would not be surprising in the near term against a backdrop of robust growth in the U.S. and weakness in Japan. We expect upward pressure on the yen to reemerge next year if Japan's current account surplus remains large.

Technical view: Last week, the U.S. dollar was strong against five of the six major currencies we regularly monitor. Only the Australian dollar was able to record a modest rally against the greenback. As a result, the dollar index was able to move through first resistance and establish a new 1993 high.

Medium term momentum continues to be constructive. Although short term oscillators have also reversed to the upside, they have done so from something of a near overbought condition. This last point may prove to be important since medium term sentiment surveys for the dollar relative to both the Japanese yen and the European currencies are overbought.

All of this suggests that the strength of recent days could be the final leg to the rally that began a bit more than two months ago. Nonetheless, resistance for the dollar index is now indicated at 97.50-98.00. From this vantage point we would view a break of the 92.50-93.50 range as a potentially important negative development.

Deutschmark

Fundamental view: The dollar remains firm at the DM 1.70 level and we expect to see further dollar strength in coming months. Estimates of real GDP growth in the U.S. of 4 per cent-to-5 per cent in the current quarter have many U.S. analysts looking for the Fed to boost interest rates in the first half of next year, if not in the first quarter. In contrast, German interest rates are likely to fall sharply next year in response to persistent weakness in the German economy. Higher-than-expected M3 growth of 6.8 per cent in October may delay the next Bundesbank rate cut until mid-January, but the trend is clear.

We continue to expect German short-term interest rates to fall by about 200 basis points from current levels to 4.0 per cent by the end of next year. With our U.S. analysts expecting U.S. short-term rates to rise to the 3.75 per cent-to-4.0 per cent range over the course of next year, Germany's short-term interest rate advantage should basically disappear, even as its labour costs remain far out of line from an international perspective.

Accordingly, there should eventually be little reason for the Dentschmark to retain any overvaluation against its estimated purchasing power parity value, which we put in the range of DM 1.85-to-DM 1.90. We continue to look for the dollar to reach DM 1.80 and DM 1.85 over the next six and 12

months respectively.

Technical view: For the week ended Nov. 19, the Deutsche mark lost 2.0 per cent. The sentiment conflict persists as the benchmark medium term sentiment survey for the currency is oversold territory while heavy call buying last week pushed the 10-day put/call ratio to its most overbought level in years. Although the currency has made a new reaction low, short term momentum still remains reasonably constructive. However, medium term momentum is quite weak and is likely to put pressure on the currency in coming weeks. Indeed, medium term momentum has the potential to maintain its new-found weakness through to January. This latter point would suggest that nearby currency strength is likely to be relatively short lived and will be only a reaction within a downturn.

There is good chart resistance for the currency at 1.65-1.66. An eventual decline to 1.75 and beyond remains a reasonably strong probability. Short term oscillators for the mark/yen cross have bottomed, but medium term oscillators seem to have peaked. This would suggest that the next short term price peak could set the stage for a second leg of decline with a possible test of the August lows below 60. For now, however, the pressure appears to be to the upside and the 66.50-67.00 level remains strong resistance. A decisive rally back through that benchmark would do much to signal further strength toward important chart resistance at 70-72.

Pound sterling

Fundamental view: The pound appreciated modestly against both the U.S.\$ and the DM following Tuesday's base rate cut, to 1.49 U.S.\$/ and DM 2.53, because the 50 basis point drop was at the lower end of market expectations. The timing of the cut was earlier than expected, probably reflecting concern that the pound might weaken going into budget day on Nov. 30, closing the opportunity for a rate cut then. Building societies have cut or are expected to cut mortgage rates by 25 basis points, providing a modest boost to consumer incomes and reducing pressure for an additional rate cut.

We expect another 50 basis point drop in the base rate in March/April, just before tax rises actually hit consumers. We are forecasting a depreciation to U.S.\$1.41 in 12 months as U.S. interest rates start to rise beginning in the second quarter of 1994.

We expect the pound to show relative strength versus other European currencies as short-term interest rates in continental Europe are expected to fall by a further 200 basis points. We look for the pound to appreciate to DM 2.60 in 12 months. Also underlying the pound's expected rise against the DM are our above-consensus forecast of 1994 U.K. growth at 3.2 per cent and our below-consensus projection of no German growth in 1994.

Technical view: The British pound lost 1.5 per cent versus the U.S. dollar and damaged its global relative strength properties. However, relative to most of the other European currencies, relative strength remains fairly good. Both short and medium term sentiment is in oversold territory. The weakness was enough to turn short term momentum back to the downside. It is now in sync with medium term momentum and, until this pressure is relieved, any nearby strength is likely to be relatively limited.

Important long term chart support remains at 1.40-1.42

U.S.\$; the ability to hold near this level in coming weeks could well improve the chance that a longer term bottom is forming. More medium term support exists near \$1.46. By contrast, important long term resistance exists near \$1.60, with medium term resistance in the 1.55-1.58 range.

Recent strength versus the DM has not been confirmed by short term momentum. Thus, even though medium term momentum remains constructive, nearby weakness appears likely and may delay the full impact of medium term improvement for a few weeks. A well-contained pullback would do much to support the currency's developing relative strength position. The cross-rate has recently been testing resistance at 2.50-2.53. Important support is at 2.43-2.44.

Japanese yen

Fundamental view: The dollar has advanced to the yen 108 level as mounting pessimism about Japan's economy contrasts with perceptions of more robust growth in the U.S. with numerous U.S. analysts now raising the possibility that the Fed will tighten monetary policy in the first quarter of next year, prospects for yet another easing of policy in Japan could suggest the possibility of further yen weakness in the near term. Pronounced weakness in the Japanese stock market in recent weeks reflects both the weak economic outlook and concern about government inaction.

We have revised down our growth forecast several times in recent months and now look for real GDP growth of only 0.8 per cent next year. We also expect a 0.5 per cent discount rate cut in the first quarter of next year to bring the discount rate to an historic low of 1.25 per cent.

Historically, however, the yen has been relatively insensitive to trends in interest rate differentials and more closely dependent on current account developments. If Japan's domestic demand remains weak next year, import growth will remain sluggish and little progress will be made in reducing the current surplus.

Based on our view that Japan's current account surplus will fall only marginally next year to \$125 billion from \$137 billion this year, we expect upward pressure on the yen to eventually resurface, despite low interest rates in Japan. We look for the yen to move to the 100 and 95 against the dollar over the next 6 and 12 months respectively.

Technical view: The Japanese yen fell 2.9 per cent against the U.S. dollar last week. While this was the weakest showing of any of the six currencies we regularly discuss, the yen's relative strength characteristics have improved. Short term momentum oscillators have peaked, implying that the recent rally has come to an end. Medium term oscillators remain downwardly biased, but a move decisively through 106 in coming weeks would appear to be enough to turn this important oscillator back up: it has been downwardly biased since early May.

This possibility, together with a generally constructive sentiment background, increases the probabilities that the recent test of the 109 is an important reference point; we will, however, still use 110-112 as benchmark support. While a near term correction appears indicated, the next rally could well place all degrees of momentum in gear to the upside. A rally through 106 could be the signal for a test of the year's high near 100.

THE BETTER HALF

By Harris



"I took the jelly out of your doughnut and replaced it with steamed cabbage."

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

RAUZE

SPEHE

TASSID

KAJECT

Now arrange the circled letters in form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: IT WAS " "

(Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumble: ALTAR PHONY KOWTOW FLUNKY

Answer: What the pirate turned construction worker had to do — WALK THE PLANK

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY NOVEMBER 27, 1993

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Take care not to make unkind remarks to others simply because your mind is focused elsewhere. You may be able to avoid time wasters as the Moon trines Neptune and Uranus by being factual and direct.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You can get into whatever practical arrangements you can make that will enhance the wellbeing of your everyday existence to last for sometime.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You always like to know the whys and wherefores of whatever is of any interest and even the satisfying of your curiosity and this day to do so.

T AURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You have an unassuming associate who only needs some personal attention and compliments to become more amenable to going along with your wishes.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You certainly have a chance now to make your environment glisten and glow by getting into the shiny-gritty of whatever improvements you make.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Dive deeply into the various means and methods by which to round out your talents so they produce better, more satisfactory terms for you.

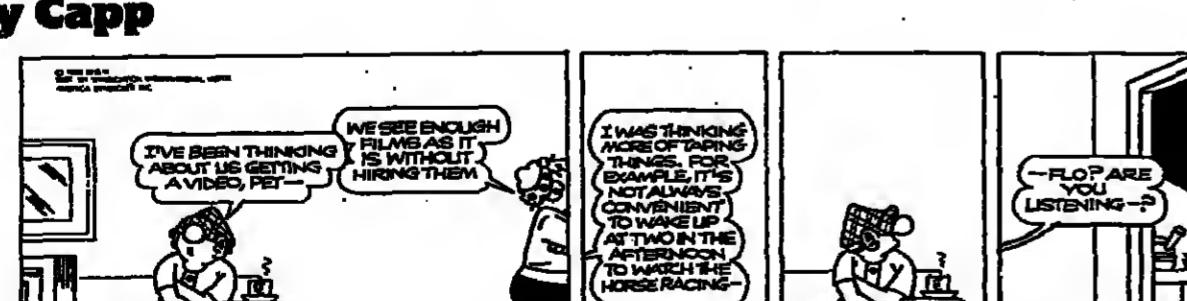
LEO: (July 22 to August 21) A day to look into all phases of how articles, plumbing, utilities are operating at your residence and modern repairs where they are necessary.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Think about all kinds of new interests that most activate you and then look into all the various benefits that can flow from them and you get right answers.

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff

ANC regional leader shot dead

Mandela warns thousands of whites may die

JOHANNESBURG (Agencies) — A senior ANC official for South Africa's Natal midlands region was shot dead and another was wounded in separate attacks at their homes in Mpumalanga on Thursday night, SAPA news agency reported Friday.

The attacks came as the African National Congress (ANC) began a three-day meeting of its regional council in the southern province, the stronghold of the ANC's archival, the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP).

An ANC spokesman in the area, Blade Nzimande, said Philip Ndlivo was shot through the heart by a lone killer armed with a nine millimetre pistol at about midnight Thursday, SAPA reported.

Mr. Nzimande said Mr. Ndlivo was the fourth top ANC official to be killed in the region over the past 18 months.

At about the same time, Mr. Nzimande said, two gunmen opened fire on another ANC official, Noel Sihisi, as he stopped his car outside his Mpumalanga home. He was shot in the leg, but managed to escape his attackers.

SAPA quoted Mr. Nzimande as saying the attacks came after "propaganda" by the IFP that the ANC's armed wing, Umkonto We Sizwe (Spear of the Nation), was planning to kill members of the IFP leadership.

Tensions have been running high in Natal and the KwaZulu homeland it incorporates, with increasing talk of the "low-intensity civil war" there erupting into a full-scale conflict as a result of rivalry between the

ANC and the IFP. IFP leader and KwaZulu Chief Minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi, who wants strong guarantees of federalism for his region, has threatened resistance to South Africa's new interim constitution, which will be approved at an ongoing special session of the parliament in Cape Town.

Natal and the townships east of Johannesburg are the worst-hit areas in South Africa's wave of political violence, accounting for 90 per cent of the deaths that occurred countrywide in October, according to the latest monthly report of the human rights commission, a left-leaning watchdog body.

In the Johannesburg suburb of Bokshurg, gunmen ambushed a police vehicle Friday morning, critically wounding two officers with automatic weapons fire and freeing 46 prisoners being taken to court, police reported.

A police spokeswoman said a third officer was missing.

Witnesses told police that a man armed with an AK47 assault rifle shot the locks off the police vehicle, before opening fire on the policemen. The gunman and three prisoners left into the gunman's car and sped away, while the rest of the prisoners fled on foot.

A wide-scale search netted 18 prisoners, but the rest remained at large, police said.

Police also came under attack in the East Rand township of Tembisa when a man hurled a hand grenade into the local station house, the spokeswoman said.

No one was hurt in the attack, she said, but police later recovered the bodies of three men shot dead in the

neighbouring townships of Kyaheong and Tokoza.

Meanwhile, South African neo-Nazi leader Eugene Terre Blanche has urged his supporters to steal guns and arm their women. Nelson Mandela predicted thousands of innocent whites would be killed if the white right sparked a civil war.

"Arm your women. Steal guns if you must. We will make your women soldiers in the name of God and for the freedom of our fatherland," Terre Blanche, leader of the Afrikaner Resistance Movement (AWB), told supporters in Port Elizabeth Thursday night.

Law and Order Minister Craig Kotze told Reuters Friday police were investigating whether Terre Blanche's comments could be construed as criminal incitement.

"We are opening a docket relating to alleged incitement to commit a crime," Mr. Kotze said.

But he said the ANC was still ready to talk to white rightists to try to prevent bloodshed. He appealed to angry black youths to stop using language which incited whites to oppose change.

The AWB, which is holding bilateral talks with the ANC on "matters of national interest", is grouped with other black and white conservatives in the Freedom Alliance, whose members quit multi-party democracy talks in July.

The ANC and the ruling National Party government are trying to accommodate the demands for virtual autonomy of the white right without compromising the interim constitution, which allows for limited federal rule in nine regions.

"Nelson Mandela has mocked the right-wingers, saying we (could) cause more damage in a short time than the ANC caused over many years. He is right. We are going to result in war.

Mr. Mandela, leader of a people's forum Thursday that there was no question of a pure "volksstaat" (white homeland) in the new South Africa.

ried out their threat of civil war.

Speaking at an ANC gathering at Randfontein, southwest of Johannesburg, Mr. Mandela said innocent whites could lose their lives, changing the momentum of violence in the country.

"If the AWB, the CP and the AVF start civil war in the country, thousands of whites could die," he told about 5,000 supporters, referring to Terre Blanche's group, the pro-apartheid Conservative Party and the white separatist Afrikaner People's Front.

Mr. Mandela said he believed right-wingers were already preparing for violence. "They are stocking arms to carry on the carnage in the country," he said.

But he said the ANC was still ready to talk to white rightists to try to prevent bloodshed. He appealed to angry black youths to stop using language which incited whites to oppose change.

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African National Congress President Nelson Mandela greets supporters behind the fence in a mining town of Randfontein, west of Johannesburg, South Africa (AFP photo)

Sarajevo convoy postponed — U.N.

SARAJEVO (R) — A locally-organised attempt to evacuate more than 1,000 Muslims, Serbs and Croats from the beleaguered Bosnian capital Friday has been postponed, a spokesman for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees said.

Peter Kessler told Reuters: "It appears that the evacuation got hung up on the issue of an HVO (Croat forces) commander detained in Sarajevo when his unit was disbanded some weeks ago."

The evacuation is postponed, at least for today," Mr. Kessler said. The buses carrying the old, the very young, the sick and war-wounded were to pass through Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat-held territory on their way to the Adriatic coast.

Mainly-Muslim Bosnian army units cracked down on the HVO unit defending Sarajevo and detained five of its commanders claiming a crackdown on organised crime and smuggling in the armed forces.

Bosnian Muslim authorities have refused men or women of fighting age, eligible for military duty, to leave the city.

Bosnian radio advised the evacuees to bring 30 German marks (\$18) to cover "additional costs of transportation".

The trip was originally planned

to cost a 100 German marks (\$60).

The evacuation will be escorted by the U.N. Protection Force for part of the way, organisers said.

Bosnian Serbs unconditionally agreed to allow the buses through, the radio said.

More than 500 Serbs were evacuated earlier this month to Serbia, but the evacuation of mainly Muslims and Croats to Croatia was delayed due to the fighting in central Bosnia.

The evacuation was to coincide with the opening of the main aid corridor in central Bosnia closed last month following the killing of a Danish driver in a Muslim-Croat shoot-out.

It also comes as relations between Muslims and Serbs appeared to be thawing.

The Serbs agreed to supply wood and coal to Sarajevo to help residents stave off the bitter winter and a direct telephone line between Bosnian Serb and Muslim leaders Radovan Karadzic and Alija Izetbegovic was due to be set up Friday to deal with emergencies, the Yugoslav News Agency, Tanjug, reported.

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"It seems to us they are doing everything possible to delay aid from reaching desperate people there," UNHCR's Lyndall Sachs told Reuters in Belgrade.

"I do not know what game they are playing at, but it is unacceptable. We have people's live at stake there and responsibility for saving their lives does not lie with us, but on people blocking the convoys."

The United Nations managed to deliver nearly 1,000 tonnes of relief supplies to towns across Bosnia since the aid route reopened Wednesday but warned much more was needed to help almost three million people survive the harsh Balkan winter.

Mediators Lord Owen and Thorvald Stoltenberg have called a meeting in Geneva Monday in a bid to persuade Bosnian leaders to resume peace talks, broken off in September when the Muslims said the partition would not give them enough land.

Bosnian Serb parliament speaker Momcilo Krajinovic warned it would be very difficult to discuss new territorial concessions.

Dog which outwitted army's best killed

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand (AFP) — Farm workers Friday killed a huge killer dog which took on legendary status after it killed hundreds of sheep, outwitted helicopter gunship and defeated the army's best snipers for three years. Nicknamed Hercules, one eyewitness described the Rhodesian ridgeback bull mastiff cross as being as big as a pony and with paws the size of dinner plates. The once-domesticated dog roamed the Whiterock area north of here for more than two years, living through one of the harshest winters this century and surviving by eating sheep. Farm worker James Duckworth said Friday he saw the dog twice in the past two weeks. He and his boss, Royce Thomsons, decided to lay poison for it and it was while driving up a track to set the poison that they saw the dog again. Duckworth jumped out of his truck and fired two shots. One wounded the dog, the other killed it. Duckworth's former neighbour, Claire Mason, said the dog had killed many hundreds of their sheep and cost them \$50,000 to \$70,000 NZ dollars (\$27,300 to \$38,290). "I am delighted and overjoyed at the news," Ms. Mason said. "I only hope the collar and tag will prove it was the same dog." Ms. Mason said.

Eureka where's my apoplexy cap?

BEIJING (R) — A Chinese scientist who invented an "apoplexy cap" was one of three doctors who won medals at the Eureka Fair of Inventions held in Belgium, the official Xinhua News Agency said Friday. The other prizes went to a combined herbal medicine and acupuncture therapy and a medicine called "cure of brain and heart" the agency said. It did not explain how any of the prize-winning inventions work. China's doctors of traditional medicine are making great efforts to publicise their breakthroughs to the rest of the world, although many Western practitioners remain dubious.

Woman's place is at home, S. Korean men say

SEOUL (R) — A woman's place is still in the home — at least that's what a survey found a majority of South Korean men in their 20s and 30s believe. The poll, by a women's magazine, showed 54.4 per cent of the men surveyed said a woman's place was at home with the children. Only 15.2 per cent said women should be free to take a job, the domestic Youhap News Agency reported Tuesday. The rest wavered somewhere in between. But there are signs of slight change in this country where a generation ago it would have been unthinkable for a man to enter the kitchen. Some 43 per cent of the 500 men polled said they approved of sharing household chores while 23.8 per cent said on account would they roll up their sleeves and pitch in. A total of 60.8 per cent said they would be perfectly happy to look after the children after work while 12.2 per cent said it was "not their duty to do so."

Among those men whose wives worked, altogether 51.5 per cent said they shared the housework while 63.6 per cent said they helped take care of the kids.

Pretty bubble in the air turns nasty

NEW YORK (R) — One of the balloons at Macy's 67th annual Thanksgiving Day parade went a little wild, injuring two people. Sonic the hedgehog, one of four new balloons, was caught by a gust of wind only a block from the parade's starting point at Columbus Circle. The hedgehog was swept up by the wind, struck a street lamp, knocking the lighting fixture to the ground where two people, an off-duty police officer and a 10-year-old child, were injured, said police department spokesman Sergeant Tina Mohrman.

Ramos just a friend — ex-model

MANILA (R) — A former fashion model said she and Philippine President Fidel Ramos were nothing but friends and reports she had been his mistress were designed to destroy him politically. Rose Marie "Baby" Armas, a Manila socialite, said she was considering entering politics and was prepared to debate her past with anyone. "I think it's politically motivated. I think they want to destroy the leadership of that somebody who has been doing so much for the country," she said. "As far as I am concerned, those things that they wrote about me are between me and God."

Yeltsin makes pre-election threat on TV campaign

MOSCOW (R) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin Friday warned groups campaigning for next month's parliamentary elections that he would halt their free television broadcasts if they used them to attack his project for a new constitution.

Mr. Yeltsin was talking at the start of a meeting with leaders of electoral blocs in the Kremlin. He said he would fight to press through the constitution, which will be put to a national referendum simultaneously with the elections on Dec. 12.

"If regional leaders go on declaring their own republics, Russia could break up for ever," he told about 300 workers in a railway carriage plant near the city's port on the Baltic Sea.

"But this can be avoided by adopting the new constitution where all the regions have equal rights and are on equal terms in relation to federal authorities."

Mr. Yeltsin's press aide Vyacheslav Kostikov said Thursday that groups using the half-hour broadcasts to attack Mr. Yeltsin over the constitutional draft and the crushing of a radical uprising with armed forces on Oct. 4 would be halted from the air.

The centrist Civic Union, as well as the Communist Party and nationalists, have attacked Mr. Yeltsin in their broadcasts over his action against the old parliament.

The free broadcasts are allotted to all 13 registered electoral groupings. They are also allowed to pay for extra air time in the evenings.

Meanwhile, an aide to President Yeltsin warned that Russia could disintegrate unless

children the difference between right and wrong."

The office of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Britain's senior Anglican prelate, demanded clarification of the remarks.

Archbishop of York John Habgood, the second highest-ranking cleric in the Church of England, said Friday Mr. MacLean had "not done his homework."

Arch. Habgood said "silly rows" between church and politicians "simply exacerbates a situation in which we are all failing to give a clear lead on morality."

With the nation still haunted by the savage death of two-year-old Bulger at the hands of two 10-year-old boys, a junior minister accused the church of remaining "strangely silent" on the importance of teaching children the difference between right and wrong.

Police, newspapers and psychiatrists were divided over whether the senseless killing of Bulger in the northern city of Liverpool last February was a symptom of a moral vacuum in British society or a unique crime that could never be fully explained.

Junior Interior Minister David MacLean incurred the wrath of church leaders when he said it had "largely been left to politicians and commentators in the press to argue about the importance of teaching children the difference between right and wrong."

He told BBC Radio that much of the church's teaching in schools and from the pulpit was unconvincing.

Trial Judge Michael Morland said exposure to violent video films may have played a part in the crime after hearing that the father of Jon Venables had rented a horror

region, a politician also drew parallels with Hitler and said Moldova alone was responsible for dealing with the sole problem for minorities — language rights.

"Defending the rights of Moldova's citizens regardless of their nationality is Moldova's exclusive right," said Alexandru Arseni, chairman of parliament's Human Rights Commission.

"Any attempt to defend them from outside is interference and aggression. This is a violation of international law."

Even officials in Belarus, the most pro-Russian of any of the former Soviet republics, blasted Mr. Kozyrev's comments.

"No one here need be defended by Russia. Everyone in Belarus has full civil rights regardless of nationality," said Valery Tsyplak, foreign policy adviser to Belarusian leader Stanislav Shushkevich.

In Ukraine, home to 11 million Russians, the largest community outside the Russian Federation, officials dismissed Mr. Kozyrev's statement, saying ethnic Russians there had even more civil rights than native Ukrainians.

"After years of Russification, there are plenty of Russian theatres, schools and other institutions in Ukraine."

In Moldova, which faces a rebellion from Russian-speaking separatists in the Dniestr

Church hits back after Bulger trial

LONDON (R) — Britain's top churchmen hit back Friday at claims in the aftermath of the chilling James Bulger child murder trial that they were failing to give a clear lead on morality.

Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. George Carey, said the trial had been a "tragedy" and that the church had been "shamed" by the "shameful" behaviour of the parents.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Morceli honoured

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Morocco's 1,500m world champion Noureddine Morceli has been elected Athlete of the Year by American magazine Track and Field News. Morceli had a superb season in 1993 when he set a new mile world record of 3min 44.39sec, and was unbeaten indoors and out over 1,500m. He also set the second fastest 1,500m of all time in winning the world title in 3:29.20 Stuttgart, Germany. Michael Johnson, who won the world 400m and 400m relay titles, was elected Best American Athlete.

Cuban sets world weightlifting record

PONCE, Puerto Rico (AP) — Pablo Lara broke the world record Thursday in the 76 kilo (167-pound) weightlifting division, the second Cuban lifter to set a world mark in three days during a regional championship here. "I'm very emotional," Lara, 25, a silver medalist at the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona, told reporters minutes after lifting 205 kilos (451 pounds). His first clean and jerk of 203 kilos (447 pounds) put him past the 20.5 kilo (446-pound) mark set in Melbourne, Australia on Nov. 10 by Alytmurad Orzurdurdiev of the former Soviet Republic of Turkmenistan. Lara bettered his new record on his second try, and also gained gold medals for his snatch class lift of 160 kilos (352 pounds) and for his total lift, 365 kilos (803 pounds). Lara was the second Cuban weightlifter to set a world mark at the Central American and Caribbean Games. On Tuesday, William Vargas lifted a record 123 kilos (270.6 pounds) in the 54-kilogramme (119-pound) snatch class en route to winning three gold medals. Vargas also broke a record set in Melbourne, passing the 122.5 kilogramme (270-pound) mark set by both Hang Bao of China and Halli Muttu of Turkey.

Butcher sacked again

SUNDERLAND, England (AFP) — Former England captain Terry Butcher was sacked for the second time in two years here Friday when he was dismissed as manager of first division strugglers Sunderland. The one-time Ipswich and Glasgow Rangers' defender, shown the door by premiership side Coventry City at the start of last year, was kicked out along with his assistant Ian Atkins. Theo Bob Murray, who sacked Butcher, added to the confusion at Roker Park by announcing his resignation as chairman, although he will remain on the board. Butcher and Atkins paid the penalty for the Roker Club's run of six successive defeats, which has left them only two points off the bottom of the table. "I'm very disappointed this has happened," said Butcher, who signed a two-and-a-half year contract last February. "I'm grateful to Sunderland for giving me the chance. It's a pity it hasn't worked out and I feel sorry for Ian, who has a lot to offer football. Football has been good to me, but I've had a lot of disappointment over the last three years."

China names strong swimming squad

BEIJING (R) — China, whose women swimmers have shown world-beating form this year, have named a strong squad for next week's world short-course championships in Palma. The 13-strong women's team includes Dai Guohong, who set the year's fastest long-course times in three events — 100 and 200 metres breaststroke and 400 metres individual medley — at September's Chinese National Games in Beijing. Huang Xiaomin, 200 breaststroke silver medalist at the 1988 Seoul Olympics and second behind Dai in Beijing, is also in the squad for the Dec. 2-5 championships in the Majorcan capital's 25-metre pool. Other leading Chinese women swimmers include freestylers Le Jinyi and Lu Bin, backstroker He Chong and butterfliers Qu Yun and Liu Limin, who set the two fastest 200 metres butterfly long-course times in the world this year at the national games.

Kankkunen ends season in style

BIRMINGHAM, England (AFP) — World champion Juha Kankkunen rounded off a superb season here with his third victory in the RAC Rally. Although he had already assured himself of a record fourth world title, the 34-year-old Finn refused to ease up to the final leg of the championship, driving his Toyota Celica to its fifth win of the year. Kankkunen charged home one minute 44 seconds clear of Sweden's Kenneth Eriksson in a Mitsubishi Lancer, while Britain's Malcolm Wilson was third in a Ford Escort Cosworth, three minutes 19 seconds further adrift. The Finn commented: "This was the hardest and toughest rally I've competed in all year. But I'm very happy that I did it, especially after winning the world title. This was the best ending I could have had to the season and it's a big motivation to carry on and do as good next year."

Woodies face N. American challenge

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — Australia's Todd Woodbridge and Mark Woodforde face a tough challenge from Canadian Grant Connell and American Pat Galbraith who they attempt to retain their ATP world doubles tennis title when the finals

start here Wednesday. The "Woodies" beat their challengers in the 1993 Wimbledon final but Connell believes Johannesburg's high altitude and the slow indoor court at Ellis Park Stadium will even things up this time. Connell and Galbraith head the world's eight top doubles combinations in the \$1.2 million tournament. "It should be a really well balanced match," Connell said, adding that the Woodies had played a "near perfect" match in the Wimbledon final.

Gilmour leads in Auckland Regatta

AUCKLAND, New Zealand (R) — Australian America's Cup skipper Peter Gilmour took the lead Friday at the end of the second day of Steinlager Logan Match Racing Regatta on Auckland Harbour. Gilmour had an unbroken run of nine wins in nine races to overtake Thursday's leader, Russell Coutts of New Zealand, the current world champion. Gilmour had started the day in equal third place after only scoring four wins from seven races on day one. Gilmour and co-skipper — who has 12 wins — are now assured of semifinal places with two rounds still to go. Ed Baird of the United States, Dutch skipper Roy Heimer and Chris Law of England share third place with 10 wins each. The day was not without drama despite light winds, with one of Law's crew falling overboard and being dragged alongside the boat. John Cutler, who represents the Japanese Nippon America's Cup Challenge, was thrown out of a race for ramming Baird when he could have avoided a collision.

Swimmer, boxer become athletes of 1993

BADEN-BADEN, Germany (AP) — Swimmer Franziska Van Almsick and boxer Henry Maske were voted Germany's Athletes of the Year Thursday, the first time stars from former east Germany swept the annual honours. Maske, who captured the International Boxing Federation light-heavyweight title in March, became the first boxer and the first male athlete from former east Germany to receive the distinction. The 29-year-old fighter, a former Olympic and amateur world champion, Van Almsick, the 15-year-old sensation who won six gold medals at this year's European Championship, is the youngest winner since the award began in 1947. The athletes are picked by a panel of sports writers. The men's national basketball team that surprisingly clinched the European title was voted Team of the Year.

Turkey to bid for 2004 games

ANKARA (R) — Istanbul, which lost a bid to host the 2000 Olympic Games, will try again for the year 2004, State Minister Sukru Erdem said Wednesday. "All international competitions to take place in Istanbul will be opportunities to show the world that this city deserves the games," he was quoted as saying by the Anatolian News Agency. Istanbul ran against Sydney, Beijing, Manchester and Berlin in the competition to host the 2000 games. But it polled only seven votes when the decision to award the games to Sydney was made in September. Prime Minister Tansu Ciller said at the time that Turkey had learnt from the experience of the campaign.

Indurain to lead Spanish 'superteam'

MADRID (AFP) — Miguel Indurain is to lead a new Spanish "superteam" formed by the takeover of the Amaya outfit by his own Banesto team. Banesto official Luis Lazaro said the new team would start the 1994 season and be led by Jose Miguel Echavarri, the Banesto leader. Eighteen riders will come from Indurain's team and Amaya will provide seven, including former Tour of Spain winner Melchor Mauri. Indurain will have Mauri, former Tour De France winner Pedro Delgado and Frenchman Jean-Francois Bernard as his deputies in one of the strongest teams on the professional circuit. Spanish press reports have said the new Banesto challenge will have an annual budget of one billion pesetas (\$7.3 million).

Jahangir delays retirement

KARACHI (R) — Defeated World Open finalist Jahangir Khan has delayed his retirement plans in order to play in next month's super series finals in Zurich. The 29-year-old Pakistani said Friday he had decided to take part because it was an invitation tournament. "This does not affect my decision to retire, I shall not play in another open event on the circuit," Jahangir said. The six-times former world champion has played in only three tournaments this year but still scored sufficient points to qualify for the eight-man super series. It will give the veteran player an opportunity to display his talents in Europe for a last time and will be boost for the tournament following the withdrawal of injured world number two Chris Dittmar of Australia. The other players who will play in Zurich are Jahangir's compatriot Jansher Khan, Australia's Rodney Martin, Brett Martin and Rodney Eyles, New Zealand's Ross Norman and Peter Marshall and Philip Whitlock of England. Finland's Sami Elopuro will replace Rodney Martin if he fails to recover from a hip injury sustained in the World Open.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
B-TANNAH HIRSCH
1991 © Future Media Services Inc.

THE KING IS DEAD

Both vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH
+ 9 4 2
J 9 5
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+ K 7

WEST
+ Q 10 8 5
A 2 2
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6 7 6 3

K 10 9 3

+ 8 6 5 4

SOUTH
+ K J
Q 10 7 6 4 3
J 6
+ A Q J

The bidding:
South West North East

Pass

TWO FLATS FOR RENT

Unfurnished flat in a modern building, first floor, consisting of 2 bedrooms, salon, dining room, 2 bathrooms and utilities, with central heating.

Furnished flat with deluxe furniture, first floor of a new building, consisting of 2 bedrooms, salon, dining room, 2 bathrooms, and utilities, with central heating.

Location: Swieifish.

Please call after 2 p.m. tel. 812324

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY WANTED

A leading Jordanian company is seeking to employ an executive secretary capable of conducting all office duties including typing, filing, office organisation. Should be fast in typing, capable to independently handle business correspondence with international companies and fluent in English (spoken & written) with minimum of 3 years experience.

Qualified applicants are invited to write in confidence to P.O. Box 7109, Amman-Jordan.

Wachter scores 2nd World Cup Alpine-skiing win

SANTA CATERINA VAL-FURVA, Italy (R) — World Cup holder Anita Wachter made it two wins out of two events this season when she cruised to victory in a giant slalom at Soelden in her native Austria on Friday.

on the podium for Austria with a time of 2:18.44. Merle clocked 2:18.65.

Wachter triumphed in the only previous World Cup race this season, a giant slalom staged on a glacier at Soelden in her native Austria on Friday.

The lightweight Wachter, affectionately dubbed the "flea from Montafon," clocked a combined time of two minutes 17.31 seconds on the artificial snow of the Cevadale Piste for a winning margin of 0.78 seconds.

Vreni Schneider of Switzerland shrugged off the after-effects of a bout of influenza to take second place, a fitting way to celebrate her 29th birthday.

France's Carole Merle, who led Wachter by a mere one-hundredth of a second on the first leg, got her line all wrong the second time around and dropped back to fourth.

Merle's woes enabled Ulrike Maier to claim another place</p

NEWS IN BRIEF

Israeli right files no-confidence motion

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's right-wing opposition Likud has called a no-confidence vote in the government next week over the arming of the Palestinian autonomy police. "This police will have thousands of weapons and be a veritable army. It's intolerable," Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu charged Friday in a radio interview. The Likud said the government was to blame for a "sure in terrorism" by signing the Sept. 13 autonomy deal. Under the deal, a "strong" Palestinian police force will ensure order in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho as Israel begins a four-month pull-out from Dec. 13. Police Minister Moshe Shahal has said Israel agrees to a 15,000-man force armed with light arms and automatic weapons. It will be the 32nd no-confidence vote since July 1992 when the Labour Party formed a new government.

Zimbabwe, Israel establish diplomatic ties

HARARE (AFP) — Zimbabwe, a staunch supporter of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), formally established diplomatic relations with Israel at ambassadorial level Friday. The agreement was signed at a ceremony in Harare by Zimbabwe's Foreign Minister Nathan Shamuyarira and Israel's Deputy Health Minister Nawaf Massalah. Israel will open an embassy in Harare in late 1994, while Zimbabwe will be represented in Israel by a non-resident ambassador until a decision is taken to open a full mission. After years of hostility towards Israel, Zimbabwe indicated its readiness to establish relations after the PLO signed a peace accord with Israel in September. Israel's ambassador to South Africa, Alon Liel, said at the ceremony that trade between the two countries could be improved from its current annual level of about \$20 million. He said Israel had embarked on a drive for new relations with Africa and the Middle East since the signing of the accord. Six African countries have either renewed or established relations with Israel since September, bringing to 27 the number of African countries formally recognising Israel. Mr. Liel said.

Resident from South Lebanon murdered

TYRE, Lebanon (AFP) — A resident of Israeli-occupied South Lebanon was murdered Friday while visiting relatives in an area to the north known for its anti-Israeli guerrilla groups, police said. Four unidentified armed gunmen in black balaclavas shot dead Arafat Sharara after breaking into his brother's house in Aifit, just north of Israel's "security zone" and south of this port city, they said. No motive was given for the killing which took place in an area where the pro-Syrian Amal and the Iranian-backed Hezbollah guerrilla groups are based. The area is patrolled by Fijian members of the U.N. peacekeeping force. In the past, residents of the zone visiting other parts of Lebanon have been questioned, threatened and even attacked on suspicion of collaborating with Israel.

Russia not ready for NATO membership

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russia would be worried about an expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) even if Russia were among the countries to be included in the alliance, President Boris Yeltsin's spokesman said Friday. Vyacheslav Kostikov told reporters that worries about expanding the organisation were felt not just by politicians and generals but also by all citizens and added that Russian membership in NATO needed "a good deal of very deep" analysis. "I don't think that either Russia or NATO are ready for this," Mr. Kostikov said. "It is a complicated question that, to be resolved, requires a revision in concepts of the world order," he added. Mr. Kostikov's remarks were the second warning in as many days from Russian officials against expanding the alliance too quickly. Yevgeny Primakov, the chief of Russia's foreign intelligence service, said Thursday that moves to include Eastern European countries in NATO would be met with "fundamental" military countermeasures by Russia. Mr. Primakov said his views, based on a KGB study, had the backing of the Russian military.

Suharto ends first Iran visit

TEHRAN (AFP) — Indonesian President Suharto wound up a four-day visit to Iran Friday with high hopes for building strong links between the two countries. Mr. Suharto, the first Indonesian head of state to visit since the 1979 Islamic revolution, told reporters at the airport that the two countries had agreed to boost bilateral cooperation in economic, scientific and technical fields. They are to launch joint efforts to build aircraft and ships, he said, speaking of "bright horizons" for relations between Tehran and Jakarta. Mr. Suharto added that his Iranian counterpart Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani had been invited to visit Indonesia. Mr. Rafsanjani said he was satisfied with Mr. Suharto's talk in Tehran that focused on bilateral ties, regional and international issues. A joint statement called for promotion of South-South cooperation and between the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). Tehran Radio said, ECO was founded by Iran, Pakistan and Turkey. The newly-independent Muslim states in Central Asia and the Caucasus joined last year.

Saudi beheaded for drug trafficking

RIYADH (AFP) — A Saudi found guilty of drug trafficking was beheaded Friday in the northwestern city of Tabuk, the interior ministry said. Akil Umairi was condemned to death for trying to smuggle a large quantity of hashish into the country, it said, quoted by the official Saudi Press Agency. His beheading brings to 82 the number of people known to have been executed in Saudi Arabia so far this year. The kingdom has applied the death penalty for drug trafficking since 1987.

Bangladeshis protest Rushdie meeting

DHAKA (AFP) — Riot police stopped Muslim fundamentalists, protesting against the meeting between U.S. President Bill Clinton and British author Salman Rushdie, from marching on the American Cultural Centre here Friday, witnesses said. Some 30 supporters of the Islamic Chhatra Majlis shouted slogans "Hang President Bill Clinton, hang Salman Rushdie" and "Down with the U.S." At a brief rally, metres from the centre, the group's leaders said America was conspiring to destroy Islam and Muslims throughout the world. However, they later left without incident. Mr. Rushdie, condemned to death by Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini for allegedly blaspheming Islam in his book the Satanic Verses, met Mr. Clinton Wednesday in Washington (see page 2). Mr. Rushdie sought U.S. help to bring about a lifting of the sentence.

Turkey faces first Euro-court ruling

STRASBOURG (AFP) — The European Court of Human Rights is to consider a complaint against Turkey brought by Cyprus, the first it has received against that country since it formally recognised the court's jurisdiction in January 1990. The complaint concerns Titi Loizidou, a resident of Nicosia, who is alleging a violation of the European Convention on Human Rights. Ms. Loizidou has been denied access to land she owns in Kyrenia, which is in the Turkish controlled area of the island. In March 1990, Ms. Loizidou crossed the demilitarised zone and the Turkish lines as part of the vanguard of a protest march. She was arrested by Turkish Cypriot police and released the same day into the hands of the United Nations, who took her back to the Greek-held sector. In her deposition, Ms. Loizidou alleged a breach of the European Convention of Human Rights in respect of her home and possessions, citing articles banning torture and inhuman and degrading treatment and upholding the rights of liberty and privacy. Before the deposition came before the court, the European Commission on Human rights ruled that because the complaints had occurred before Turkey's recognition of the court's jurisdiction, there had been no breach of the articles cited by Ms. Loizidou. The commission's findings are not binding on the court.



Policemen carry away demonstration banners confiscated in the 'Kurdistan Centre' in Bonn Friday (AFP photo)

Rabin pressured for failing to sell truthful vision of peace

TEL AVIV (AP) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is facing a groundswell of criticism for failing to convince Israelis that peace with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) is in their interest even if it means more "concessions" than they have been led to expect.

Addressing members of the governing Labour Party Thursday, Mr. Rabin dismissed polls showing support for the peace accord with the PLO has declined dramatically since its signing Sept. 13, from two-thirds of the public then to a minority in some surveys now.

Critics within his own moderate camp charge Mr. Rabin has allowed opponents of peace to gain momentum since he reversed decades of policy in shaking PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's band on the White House lawn.

There are also rumblings of doubt about one of the fundamental tenets of the accord, that accommodation can only be achieved in stages, with decisions on contentious issues like borders and the future of Jerusalem put off for years.

The impression that Israel is giving away little — primarily the tiny, unwanted Gaza Strip — in return for peace was effective in creating the initial broad consensus for Mr. Rabin.

But as talks over implementing the accord continue towards the target date of Dec. 13, there has been a spate of fatal attacks on Jews. Settlers have responded by randomly beating Arabs and destroying property.

Labour legislator Ephraim Sneh, a reserve general, warned that if the process "drags on for too long" it may lose majority support on both sides.

"We have to see what stems from the accord," he told Israel Radio. "It's too bad that not enough people explained to the public realistically what we are facing."

He blasted those who "don't see the overall picture" and intervene with "hypothetical

arguments" about an eventual final settlement.

"We now have an agreement, it has a first stage and we are in negotiations," he said. "This is the test: To reach an agreement, to prove what we said is achievable, to continue the talks."

But many doves charge that Mr. Rabin, by sticking to a multi-stage approach with the Palestinians and hesitating to make concessions to Syria, has squandered the freedom of movement he may have enjoyed in September.

Uri Avneri, a noted peace activist, said Mr. Rabin "lost the momentum of the great moment" by waffling.

At the same time, newspapers this week were filled with commentaries urging Mr. Rabin to come clean about the accord.

In the liberal Haaretz daily, columnist Gideon Samet wrote Mr. Rabin had decided "not to utter the truth that there will be a Palestinian state in almost all the West Bank" because of a public backlash.

Conservative commentator Avraham Tal called the interim settlement "a shameful ploy of hypocritical trickery."

On Thursday, Mr. Rabin faced another challenge when Abdul Wabab Darawsheh, head of the tiny Arab Democratic Party, threatened to bolt Mr. Rabin's de-facto coalition unless he was appointed minister.

But Israel TV reported that in a meeting Thursday evening, Mr. Rabin refused to break the taboo on introducing an Arab into the cabinet. Critics argue an Arab minister could endanger Israel through access to state secrets.

Darawsheh's two seats are critical to Mr. Rabin, whose government rests on a majority of only 61 out of 120 seats in parliament.

Associated organisations covered by the ban include the Kurdish National Liberation Front (ERNK), the Dusseldorf-based Kurdish news agency, Kurd-Ha, the Kurdistan Committee and various solidarity groups.

"Today's banning of the PKK and its associated organisations is a clear signal against every form of extremism in Germany," said Mr. Kanther, who has said repe-

PLO reformists campaign despite resistance

By Lamis K. Andoni

AMMAN — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat continues to resist fundamental changes in the decision-making process in spite of mounting internal and external pressure on him to delegate power to professionals with political and technical expertise.

So far Mr. Arafat has refused to bow to the demands by internal opposition and limited his steps to tactics that ensure his control of power without yielding any substantive concessions. PLO insiders say.

But the reformist movement, which is organising itself in a "democratic coalition or forum," is still relentlessly seeking to gather support among Palestinian groups and independents to pressure Mr. Arafat to effect democratic reforms and delegate responsibilities to economic experts who will negotiate the terms of Palestinian autonomy.

In the last week, the demands for reforms gained wider support among Palestinian investors, independent politicians and groups.

The movement, initiated by the Palestine People's Party (PPP) and several independents, has been formally joined by another ally of Mr. Arafat, the Palestinian Democratic Union (PDU).

The Jordan Times has learned that a group of Palestinian investors have also joined the campaign, demanding that the PLO pursue

autonomy in a political one and so is ours."

Mr. Arafat had successfully used these arguments to sway support of the strong Fatah Revolutionary Council that met in Tunis earlier this month.

Even his critics within the council were alarmed by the prospect of giving in to the "donors' conditions" or a takeover by technocrats, particularly from outside the PLO.

Mr. Arafat has been repeatedly telling his colleagues that he was ready to hire a big team of experts provided that the PLO leadership maintains control over political decisions.

But his critics argue that although they agree with him that supervising the negotiations and economy are essentially political and not technical decisions, there should be fundamental reforms in the decision-making process. They maintain that without such reforms the Palestinian position will be vulnerable to Israeli-imposed constraints to prevent the emergence of a nucleus of a Palestinian state.

They say that Mr. Arafat's arguments are no more than a cover to his reluctance to stem corruption in his immediate circles that have been trying to use the leader's monopoly over decisions and claims of allegiance to his person to further take the

Germany bans PKK, affiliated groups

BONN (Agencies) — German Interior Minister Manfred Kanther Friday outlawed the separatist Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) and 35 related organisations.

"The extremism of foreigners must be resisted with determination," Mr. Kanther said.

"Germany cannot serve as a theatre of war to foreign terrorists," he added.

The PKK has carried out a

number of attacks against Turkish interests here, among them a series of attacks earlier this month which left one dead and 18 injured.

Warrants have been issued to search flats and shops used by the PKK, while the party's bank funds have been seized and its mail is being stopped.

France recently also round-ed up a number of PKK sympathisers.

The statement said the PKK in 1992 and 1993 alone carried out six major attacks in Western Europe and Germany.

"The PKK has been banned because it uses violence as a means to reach its goals," it said.

"Foreign extremism must be fought with determination," Mr. Kanther, a conservative member of Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrats (CDU) said. "Germany must not become a battlefield for foreign terrorists."

"The ban is being carried out at this very moment," the ministry said.

"The assets of the organisation are being secured through well over 100 measures throughout the regional states such as searches of clubs, businesses and homes and the seizure of the contents of post office boxes and bank accounts," it said.

Turkey, which outlaws the PKK and brands it terrorist, has been pressing European states to stop the group's activities.

The PKK has denied involvement in a wave of attacks on Turkish targets in Western Europe on Nov. 4, including the firebombing of a restaurant in Wiesbaden, Germany, that killed a Turkish man.

The statement said 600 PKK activists joined 50 attacks in Germany as part of European action on June 24, including the taking of hostages in the Turkish consulate in Munich.

"The PKK in pursuit of its goals puts pressure on Kurdish citizens to join the group, persecutes political opponents and there are suspicions that it uses blackmail to get money for its acts of violence," the statement said.

"Associated organisations covered by the ban include the Kurdish National Liberation Front (ERNK), the Dusseldorf-based Kurdish news agency, Kurd-Ha, the Kurdistan Committee and various solidarity groups."

"Today's banning of the PKK and its associated organisations is a clear signal against every form of extremism in Germany," said Mr. Kanther, who has said repe-

COLUMN 10

Former Bhutan royal adviser jailed for life

NEW DELHI (AFP) — A former adviser to the king of Bhutan has been sentenced to life in prison for leading an insurrection against the monarch of the tiny Himalayan state. Ten Nati Rizal, a founder of the Bhutan People's Party, was convicted of subversion and sentenced by the high court on Nov. 16, the state-run newspaper Kuensel reported in an edition received here Friday. Mr. Rizal was accused of various offenses under the national security act in connection with the insurgency launched four years ago in the south of the country by ethnic Nepalese villagers. Mr. Rizal was arrested in November 1989. He was previously detained in June 1988, when he was a member of the Royal Advisory Council, but was released the same month by Bhutanese King Jigme Singye Wangchuk. More than 100,000 ethnic Nepalis have fled southern Bhutan for neighbouring Nepal since 1989, citing persecution by the Buddhist-dominated government. Bhutan claims that the refugees, mostly Hindus of Nepalese descent, are immigrants from India or Nepal. Bhutan, wedged between Tibet and northeastern India with a population of 600,000, is one of the world's most isolated countries limiting tourism and fiercely protective of its Buddhist heritage.

Contraceptive pill also effective against cancer

BONN (AFP) — The contraceptive pill is effective in preventing cancer, doctors and medical researchers heard here. "The pill has avoided more cancers than any other therapy," Walter Jonat, a specialist in female cancers, told a conference of 90 colleagues from 11 countries organised by a German anti-cancer foundation. He said that studies in the United States showed that women who took the pill over five years were 20 per cent less likely to develop ovarian cancer than those who did not, and 30 per cent less likely to contract cancer of the womb. On the other hand, the risk of developing breast cancer increased slightly. A further study involving 7,300 women in several countries is to be launched early next year to confirm these results, Dr. Jonat said.

5,000-year-old skeleton found in desert cave

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's hunt for more Dead Sea scrolls in land which could soon fall under Palestinian autonomy has led to the discovery of a 5,000-year-old skeleton, the antiquities authority said Friday. Archaeologists at first thought the skeleton, wrapped in a sack and well-preserved, was a mere 2,200-year-old warrior from the Jewish Hasmonean Period. However closer examination of the bones, a bow and arrow found in a cave in the West Bank desert above Jericho revealed that he lived in the early Canaanite era. Operation Scroll has angered Palestinians who see the major sweep as a last-minute grab for hidden treasures before Israel begins to hand back occupied territory. Gold and silver jewellery from the First Temple Period (1000-586 BC) has also been found in some 350 caves surveyed in the last two weeks. Authority director Amir Drori said the operation involving 64 archaeologists would be scaled down from next week. The authority hopes the sweep will yield more fragments of ancient Hebrew scrolls first located at Qumran in 1947 and considered the most important Jewish treasures of the region.

Yeltsin allows church to use historic icons

MOSCOW (AP) — President Boris Yeltsin allowed the Russian Orthodox Church to use in its services two most precious and venerated Russian icons from the state collections, the presidential press-service said Monday. Mr. Yeltsin's order ended a long-running dispute between the church and museum officials on the ownership of the icons, which belonged to the church and were confiscated by the state after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. The Virgin Of Vladimir and the Holy Trinity icons have been kept at Moscow's Tretyakov Gallery, the main state collection of Russian art.